HM

THE HARD MUSIC MAGAZINE

The Devil Wears Prada
Emery
The Showdown at Ozzfest
Cry of the Afflicted
Chris Cornell
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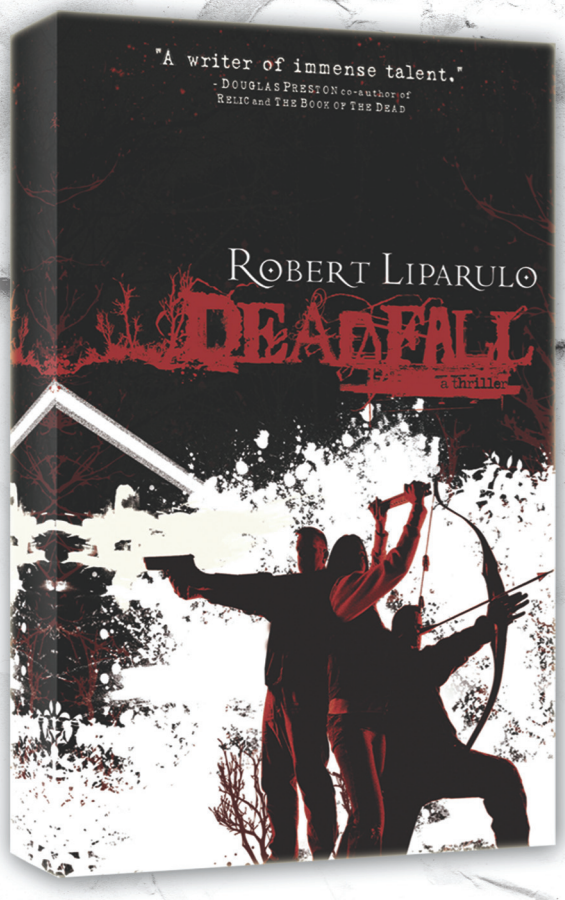

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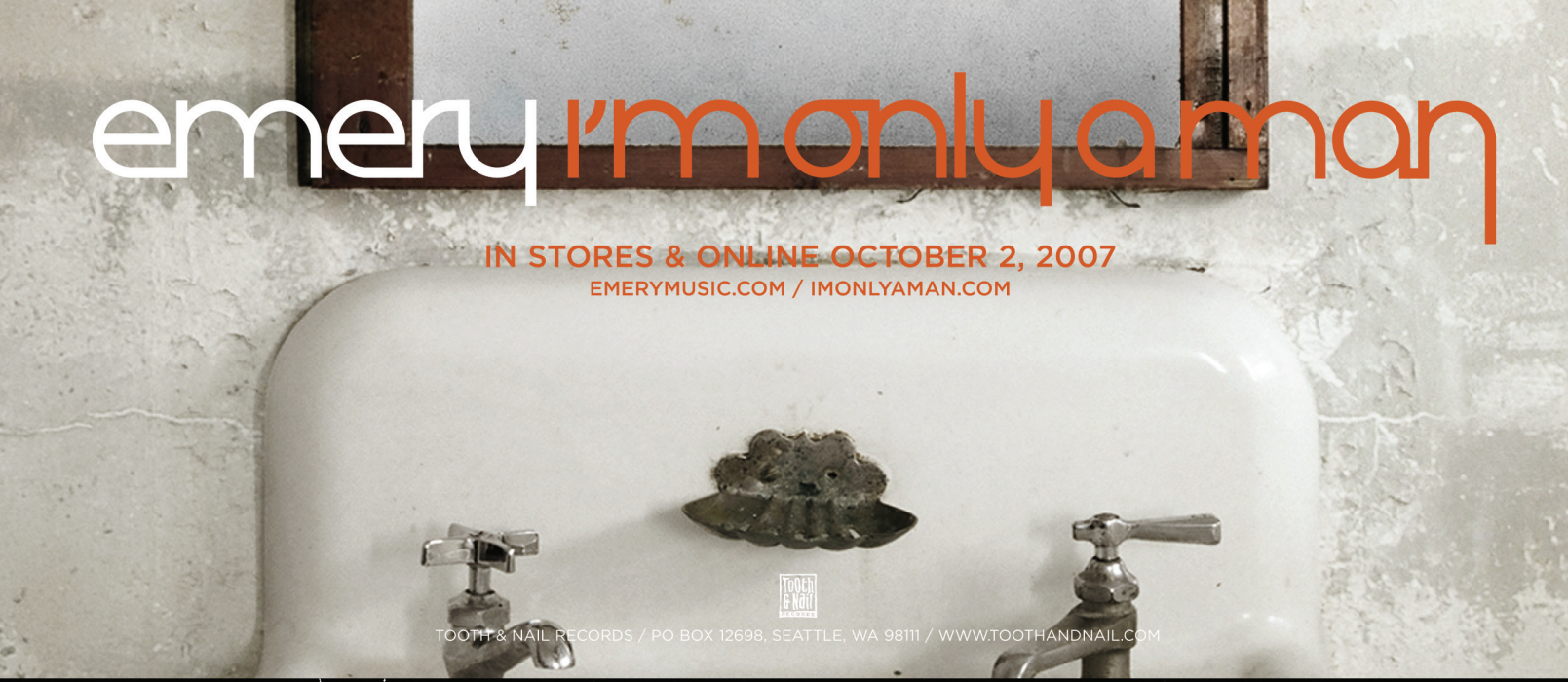
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From the editor

Doug Van Pelt

KICKED AROUND LIKE A SOCCER BALL

That's how I felt on the last morning of deadline for this issue. I keep a score on a marker board here at the HM offices, and it reads: "Deadline 03 - DVP 02." I was hoping to tie it up with this issue. Heck, I had the cover story chosen and the cover and poster designed long ago... I thought things were cruising along! I accepted an invitation to write a David Crowder cover story for CCM, put in time on all three days of the Austin City Limits Festival, took in Ozzfest, Family Values, and a couple other shows. Oh well, like a famous voice once sang, "Don't cry for me, Argentina!"

Like the last couple of issues (and last two years, really), it sounds like there's a LOT of really good music out there. I'm definitely digging a lot of what I hear. I got a really cool surprise just two days before deadline was over this time: an email with a link to compressed files of the brand new Demon Hunter album. I wish I could forward that email to all 10,419 of you on the HM e-list, but each file is "watermarked" with my identification and they'd do terrible things to me when they traced it back to me. (I'd probably end up photographed with a hole in my skull for the next DH album cover!) Too late to absorb it properly and get a review in this issue (but look at hmmag.com for one prior to its street date), which would also require yanking some other piece of editorial out to make room. That's one of the hardest things to do with a magazine – at least when you're feeling good about the content that's in it. I'm blessed to say I feel that way about this issue. Of particular pleasure is how the Chris Cornell interview turned out. By the way, did you get a chance to hear a large chunk of that in episode #9 of the HM Magazine Podcast? I think this is one of my better interviews, mostly because Cornell is so articulate and thoughtful.

If you get burned out by the hustle and bustle of the Christmas season coming up, maybe you can repeat this salutation I leave you with: Merry Christmas; Happy Birthday Jesus; and Rejoice – the Wonderful Incarnate Godman has visited our planet!

SPINNING AT HM NOW

PARKER THEORY	*Leaving California*	Wonderfully refreshing and melodic rock.
JARS OF CLAY	*The Essential Jars...*	Ample proof that this is a great band after all.
DEMON HUNTER	*Storm the Gates of Hell*	Like a best of – melding their strong points.
BRANDI CARLILE	*The Story*	T Bone B produced sweetness in song.
JOHNNY CASH	*Reading the Complete NT*	This voice was made for story tellin.'
VARIOUS ARTISTS	*Stockings by the Fire*	Old & new unite for this cozy Starbucks sampler.
VARIOUS ARTISTS	*Bethlehem Skyline*	Getting in the mood early here in hot Texas.

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Letters to the Edit

THE SHOWDOWN

I finally got around to writing a response about the latest As I Lay Dying release and I have to say that it is worlds above *Shadows Are Security*. Mainly cause Adam D, is such an awesome producer who brought out a lot of sounds that didn't exist within *Shadows*. Tim Lambesis is a great songwriter and I think this might let him pass on the production duties next time as well, cause this gives him the opportunity to sing behind the mic. I have to rate this album as one of the best releases of 2007 along with The Showdown and The Almost. On a side note: prior to writing this I was listening to the aforementioned Showdown and a lightening bolt cracked right above my truck; so I guess it's true that they deliver High Voltage Heavy Metal.
–George Little, Mesquite, TX

Ed – You're darn right they're high voltage! Let us know if you dig the Ozzfest report on page 48.

A DEMON HUNTER WEDDING

I received my subscription to HM as a Birthday gift. I don't recall being told how long the subscription is for. Is there somewhere I can check how much is left on my subscription. Also on a personal note I thought you'd find it interesting that I got married several months ago, and at my reception (among 100's of other great Christian tunes)we played Demon Hunter's "Not I" and had a mosh pit going at the reception hall. Pretty sweet, I know I'll never forget it. My wife and I are both into "hard" music and are very upfront about our faith, and we figured our reception is supposed to be a reflection of who we are, and that's who we are! My uncle was the DJ and he told me that the reception hall coordinator told him he "ruined our wedding" and that it was the "craziest" reception they'd ever seen. He quickly informed her that it was our choice (we put the playlist on my ipod) and our control of the volume (often loud!). But all in attendance loved it, they all seemed to be bored of the tired cliche wedding/reception. We also exited the actual ceremony to "Canon in D" on electric guitar (of Youtube fame). Keep up the great work on the mag. God Bless.
–Brandon Landis, via internet

Ed – That is too cool. I wanted to play Zeppelin's "Thank You" in my wedding, but my wife wouldn't let me. Hey, your mailing label has the words "Expires with #__" followed by a 2-digit number. Add 100 to that number and you have the issue # that your subscription expires with. Of course, you can also always call or email us if you have any questions like this.

POLLS ARE FOR FOOLS

I've given up on reader's polls – in music magazines in general, not just HM. They are only about who is popular at the moment, and they are not reflective at all of actual musicianship. (I'm talking about polls that list best guitarist, best bass player, etc.) So, as far as I'm concerned, put your poll online. Don't waste valuable magazine space.
–Tom Kumbalek, Manitowoc, WI

Ed – Ouch! You probably won't like seeing the ballot and survey on pages 30-31! Thanks for your, um, honesty and opinion! Did you play Demon Hunter at your wedding?

WHO REPORTS THIS "NEWS?"

In the new September/October issue of HM, in the News Bullets section on the bottom of page 70, it says: "Jimmy Ryan (ex-Haste The Day) has a new band called Cry Of The Afflicted." But Jimmy Ryan isn't actually in COTA, but rather is in an unsigned Seattle area band called Trenches. I just thought I would let you know.
–Michael Anderson, via internet

Ed – My bad! Jimmy told me about "his new band," but he was refering to "his" band as in the band that he oversees in his job as A&R for the label. I'm an idiot.

WHO REVIEWS THIS STUFF?

This is Jeremy from The Devil Wears Prada. I really enjoyed your review of our album in the latest issue and I'm so glad you like it. It means a lot when someone I respect as yourself is into it :) I'd love for TDWP to be able to do some more stuff with HM, I grew up reading the magazine, have several covers on my wall, haha, I'm a big fan, and it's insane to see my band in there. God bless. Thanks for the kind words.
–Jeremy DePoyster, via internet

HM

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SCRIPTURE "Then He said to me, 'Prophesy to these bones and say to them, "Dry bones, hear the Word of the Lord! This is what the Sovereign Lord says to these bones: I will make breath enter you, and you will come to life. I will attach tendons to you and make flesh come upon you and cover you with skin; I will put breath in you, and you will come to life. Then you will know that I am the Lord."'" (Ezekiel 37:4-6)

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HARDNEWS
Quick & concise

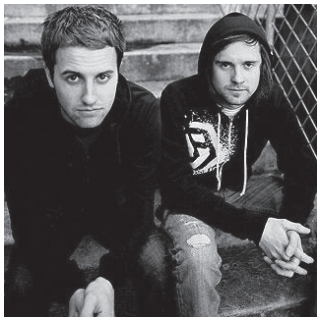
EVERETT
DALLAS TAYLOR GOES OFF

Everett is a new instrumental project from Maylene and the Sons of Disaster (and former Underoath) frontman, Dallas Taylor. Joining Taylor for the brilliant and beautiful 4-song EP, *Destination*, are Ryan Parrish (formerly a part of Hopesfall and Celebrity) on guitar; Matt Fine (of Celebrity) on drums; and Patrick Copeland on piano, snyths. Since Taylor is not singing on this project, one may wonder what part he plays. He pretty much just stands there, wailing away with a cowbell (kidding). Actually, he plays piano and synths, too. This first release from the outfit was recorded, mixed and mastered by Bryan Raitt (Aireline, The Golden Sounds) at Seamonster Sound. The cover art (always important in an instrumental album) was crafted by Joshua Beiser [pixel-nation.net].

RIYL: Air, Sigur Ros, Hammock, Radiohead.

ILIA
SERIOUS GIRL POWER

What if Barlow Girl wanted to get their message to actually hang on an Ozzfest stage? ilia is an all-girl band that pushes a message of purity in a modern world, but they're also developing a metal sound that mixes melody and those crunchy metal tones that try to out-volume a Harley Davidson's muffler pipe. While a quick view of their youtube videos show them to still be a work in progress, they're playing out quite a bit. They just finished a new recording that's being mixed and should be out soon this fall. And their name (which is hard to spell properly with most fonts) is apparently a Hebrew word that means "God is Lord."



Anberlin signs to Universal Republic

Universal Republic Records has signed Florida rock band Anberlin, it was announced today by Monte Lipman, President of Universal Republic Records. "Anberlin has been able to build one of the most enthusiastic followings online and across the country by remaining faithful to their music and their fans," stated Mr. Lipman. "They represent the boldest and the brightest on the rock horizon and we welcome them to the Universal Republic family." Anberlin's combined releases have sold more than 350,000 albums through their founding label Tooth & Nail Records, with their most recent album, *Cities*, debuting on Billboard's Top Albums chart in February of this year at #19. The disc has also soared past the 100,000 indie-sales milestone, fueled by their riveting first single "Godspeed." Their much anticipated Universal Republic Records debut is scheduled for a mid 2008 release.

News bullets

HasteThe Day hit the road this fall with It Dies Today and Atreyu.

A Plea For Purging hit the road with **War Of Ages** and **Inked In Blood**.

Contrary to what was reported in these pages, **Jimmy Ryan** does have a new band (but it's not Cry of the Afflicted, which he A&R'd for the label). It's called **Trenches**.

Following their departure from the platinum-selling band **Kutless**, founding member **Kyle Mitchell** and bass player **Kyle Zeigler** have announced the first project release under their new label imprint, Verbatim Records. Newcomer **Logan Martin**'s debut CD entitled *Colorless* will release nationwide via Infinity Distribution on September 25, 2007.

David Crowder Band gave fans an inside look at the recording process for the new album (*Remedy*) last spring, offering an eight-webcam view of The Barn, a recording facility built by the David Crowder Band. Fans were given unprecedented access to the recording process with cameras left running 24 hours a day. In describing his worship music, Crowder says: "I'm trying to make you sing from inside where you believe. Like it's something that you need, like it means everything. And I'm trying to make you feel that this is for real, that life is happening. That it means everything. I'm just trying to make you sing." The band's upcoming club tour will include **The Myriad**.

Derek Webb reunited with **Caedmon's Call** for their latest album, *Overdressed*.

Norma Jean are touring this fall with Saosin and Alexisonfire. Norma Jean will also be playing the *Saints and Sinners Festival* at the Convention Hall in Asbury Park, NJ on November 4. The festival also features such heavy hitters as Glassjaw, **August Burns Red**, Between The Buried and Me, Walls of Jericho and many more. They are planning to return home after the US tour to write and record a brand-new record, tentatively due in Summer 2008.

Classic Crime

BY MATT CONNER

"It definitely didn't happen overnight," notes The Classic Crime vocalist Matt MacDonald on the band's eventual touchdown at Tooth & Nail. "First we were found and represented by great managers. They set up a few showcases for many a major label, but we were a baby band back then with little to no touring experience, and I don't think we were able to convince the majors to sign us. It was a blessing in disguise, because at that point, I think we may have disappointed the suits…"

"Tooth and Nail heard about us and were interested though, and they were willing and able to develop a band like us. More importantly, they were really excited about our music."

MacDonald and the rest of The Classic Crime – guitarist Justin Duque, bassist Alan Clark, guitarist Robbie Negrin and drummer Paul Erickson – certainly showcase the cause for such excitement on their most recent release, *Albatross* – an amalgam of melodic and hard rock elements that succeeds quite brilliantly. For MacDonald, the album's significance is found in its symbolism.

"I saw a two-hour special on Antarctica while recording the record, and the albatross blew me away. I knew right away that's what I wanted our record to be called…One [image] in particular stood out from all the rest, and that was the one of an albatross stranded in the water because of the lack of wind needed to take flight. The bird was fighting off a great white shark. Every time the shark surfaced, the albatross would thrust its giant beak into its snout. Just the tenacity and will to survive alone forced me to admire it. It kind of paralleled what a small band faces in the giant sea of music these days."

The Classic Crime continues their display of tenacity with a slightly laid back feel this fall on an acoustic EP entitled *Seattle Sessions*, while they await their next studio release.

"It's seven brand new songs that are totally different from *Albatross*," explains MacDonald. "We recorded the songs while we were home in Seattle during one of our breaks between tours. I'm really excited about the way they turned out. People drawn to softer styles of music will probably enjoy it, but I also think fans of *Albatross* will also enjoy it. Those who don't like acoustic music need not worry, we're currently writing our next release and it's sounding better than anything we've done yet."

Atticus Fault has been recording more music, which they are revealing on their myspace page [myspace.com/atticusfault]

Alove For Enemies has announced that they will be bringing the band to a rest. After 1 EP, 2 full length albums, countless US tours and a European tour, the band has announced that it is time to move on. ALFE is playing its 2nd to last show at *Facedown Fest East Coast* and their final show will be on Long Island shortly after the fest. "We are happy to have worked with these guys and consider it an honor that they have chosen Facedown Fest East Coast to be one of their final shows."

Grand Rapids, MI band **Still Remains** are gearing up to hit the road again. After recently completing a successful run on the SmartPunk Stage of this year's *Vans Warped Tour*, the band are heading out on tour this fall with Aiden and Drop Dead, Gorgeous. The band has released the first video from their latest album, for the song "Stay Captive." Immediately following the tour, the band will head across the pond for a UK headline run. Before heading overseas, the band will shoot their second video from *The Serpent* while in Los Angeles for "Dancing With The Enemy."

Gotee crunk rockers **Family Force 5** will hit 30 cities nationwide as they headline the *Dance, Rawr, Dance Tour* with bands **Jonezetta** and **The Secret Handshake** beginning this October 1st. In addition, a sponsorship by Outerlight Entertainment has led to the band partnering with Jedidiah Clothing and the Hope Collection, a series of t-shirts designed to benefit various humanitarian organizations and their causes.

As I Lay Dying's *An Ocean Between Us* has sold great right out of the gate, making it the highest debut in their label's 25-year history.

Quick And The Dead have signed to Indie Vision Music.

Paul Roraback (ex-**Grammatrain**, **Gideon's Press**) has been recording some solo material.

HARDNEWS
Page fourteen

Evoka

Explain to me the first reactions/emotions felt the first time you heard your music on the radio?
It's so funny looking back, but at the time it was so surreal. I was in my car when I first heard it, and I was so excited that I ran inside the house and taped what was left of the song. I even let the tape continue recording until the dj gave out the station ID, so that I would have proof. I'm sure that tape is still somewhere in my house.

How do you feel about artists being involved in political causes (like RockTheVote, for instance)? Why do you feel this way? Please explain.
This is a really tough question. I think there is a fine line between supporting a political cause and promoting a political agenda. For instance, I don't have a problem if an artist feels the need to raise awareness for a cause or shed light on an injustice that may be occurring in order to promote change. I am a bit weary, however, when an artist uses their status to promote their own political agenda.

What was the impetus for your last fight?
There were quite a few catalysts that led to the last 'disagreement' within the band. I think the biggest was frustration. When you put your heart and soul into something and you have a grand vision of a glorious outcome, it's so easy to get frustrated when things don't work as imagined and then get caught up in your own 'pitty.'

Which artists inspire you to greatness? Which ones almost inspire you to quit (because of their greatness)? Which ones invoke anger? Why?
There's a band from Jersey called "Ours," of which we are all quite fond of. I actually stumbled upon their music a few years ago and was instantly hooked by the passion that is captured in their music. It's almost contagious. U2 is another great source of inspiration. Their ability to write timeless music is incredible, and the way that they are able to keep it simple but interesting is ingenious. As far as invoking anger, there are plenty of bands that do that simply from the fact that I dislike their music and for some reason or another I can't escape from hearing their songs, whether it be on the radio, tv, cell phone ringers, etc. But as far as naming names, I won't do that here because it's simply my opinion.

How would you describe your style? Which artists (if any) do you think your music most resembles?
That's a tough question, and one that labels seem to struggle with as well. We keep hearing from most major labels that we are too indie and the indie labels say that we are too mainstream. That's quite a catch 22, don't you think? As far as our sound, the description most commonly used would be "British," which I think is fair assessment considering most of the music we listen to does come from overseas.

To read the entire Evoka interview, go to hmmag.com

News bullets

Independent filmmaker Sarah Gibson's newest film, *Forged*, has been accepted to the Hell's Half Mile Film and Music Festival in Bay City, MI. The festival will be held in October. *Forged* looks into the lives of young, unsigned, Christian metal bands and the impact they have on their fans. The film features members from **Sealed by Blood**, the former band **Betrayed by a Kiss**, and HM's own DVP.

Ennepetal Germany's 2-day festival, Christmas Rock Night, has announced its lineup (Dec 7 & 8): **Disciple**; **Pillar**; **Spoken**; **Project 86**; **Fireflight**; **Tourniquet**; **Tree 63**; **Building 429**; **Flatfoot 56**; **Verra Cruz**; **Sarah Brendel**; **Make Up Your Mind**; **Waiting for Steve**; **Illuminandi**; **Echtzeit**; **MySpoon**; **Arson**; **Blossom**; **Crossing**; **redhanded**; and **Irrsterne**.

Maylene and the Sons of Disaster have completed work on the second music video from its critically acclaimed new album, *II*. The video for "Darkest of Kin," was shot on location at Hurley Studios in California by Director Soren (Deftones, Kyuss, ALOL / A Life Once Lost) the day following the band's final live appearance as part of the 2007 *VANS Warped Tour*. It features the band performing while skateboarding cult heavyweight Steve "Le Machine" Alba and a slew of "old school pool skaters" cut it up in the background. The high energy video is expected to make its world television and viral online premiere(s) imminently. "Darkest of Kin" and more music from Maylene is also prominently featured in the new Hurley short surf film, *Sound & Vision Vol. 1*. The band's anthem "Memories of the Grove" has been added to the soundtrack to the forthcoming Activison skateboarding game *Tony Hawk's Proving Ground*, alongside Bad Brains, Beastie Boys, Bloc Party, Foo Fighters, Nirvana and The Sex Pistols. Currently the band is on the road with **Underoath** and Every Time I Die.

Following a successful run of high profile shows in the U.S. as a main stage headlining act on this year's *Vans Warped Tour* as well as overseas, **Underoath** have extended their fall headlining run through November. The trek will take the band through 37 cities, which will be filmed for a live concert and documentary DVD.

I, Sleepwalker

What are the top 5 reasons to be alive today?
Michael Grey: I mean I'm just going to take it as reasons why it's better today than any other time. No joke, this is one of the hardest questions I've ever had to answer and this is in no particular order. I guess I would have to say that it's really easy to get ahold of people now, like with the internet and stuff. It's really easy to get ahold of people, and spread music around, let people hear your band. I like wrestling a lot, and it's a lot better now than it used to be, in my opinion. Music is a lot more diverse than it used to be, you see a lot more incorporation of different styles. Technology is killer now, have you seen one of those iPhones? And definitely the fact that we live in a free place, where we can worship freely, and come and go freely, and don't have to worry about being oppressed. Maybe I'm looking at that one too far into the past...

Will Jesus come back in our lifetime? Why or why not?
Honestly, I can't say that for sure, I don't know that anybody can say that for sure. I mean, a lot of the signs are there, but nobody can for sure be able to tell when that its going to happen. But if it does, I just hope that all the people I care about have their heads on straight.

How much "Southern Rock" sound is too much (if that were possible) ... or how little too low?
You know, being from the South, I love Southern rock. But I can't say that there is a way to have TOO much Southern rock; because, I mean, you have to represent where you're from and if when you're jamming out some songs, and that twang comes out, let it flow. I mean, if there isn't any Southern twang to a song, then there isn't. Sometimes it happens, sometimes it doesn't.

What sort of experience have any of ya'll had with snakes? Tell me some stories.
Honestly, since it's just me talking. I seriously, won't go anywhere near them. The movie *Anaconda* is as close as I want to get. To steal a phrase from some friends of mine, in the sense of real snakes, the last thing I want to do is "git snake bit." But Steven, our bassist, works at a pet store, so you know this guy loves snakes. He's been breeding some, so if anybody wants to buy some snakes, get at us.

What truly excites you guys musically in the current music scene?
I mean honestly, for me, there's a lot of good stuff coming out. I like the fact that I went to *Warped Tour* (yeah I'm sure a lot of people are halting their reading of this) and it is something I haven't been to in, like, 5 years, and I was really surprised at how many killer bands were playing and getting the chance to play at something that big. There's a lot of awesome bands coming out. I think a lot more bands are being able to come out with more than one good album.

Anything else you'd like to add?
I'd just like to add that to everybody reading this, especially people in bands: Just keep doing what you're doing, try hard at it while you can, and just jam out. God is looking out for you, and just everybody stay safe on the road.

Falling Up will be hitting the road for *The Captiva U.S. Tour* with **This Beautiful Republic**, **The Send** and A Dream Too Late.

In 2004, Deep Elm Record's legendary compilation series The Emo Diaries unofficially came to rest as the longest running compilation series in the history of indie rock with its tenth chapter and a total of 135 unreleased songs. Deep Elm cited "the bastardization of the term 'emo' in today's pop culture, as well as mainstream's stranglehold and subsequent commercialization of the genre, which placed the focus squarely on the aesthetic...not the music, the energy or the passion." Essentially, Deep Elm refused to play the game and closed the doors on the genre they helped to document, nurture and expose to the world. But Deep Elm now returns with *The Emo Diaries, Chapter 11* with **Knockout Kings**, Above Them, This Drama, The Crash Engine, and many more.

John Davis' previous band, Superdrag, will be releasing a limited edition, double CD entitled *4-Track Rock !!! 1992-1995 + Complete Bender Sessions*, which'll be exclusively available at shows when the reunited original lineup is back on tour this fall.

Fireflight is joining Disciple on its 35-city *Scars Remain Tour*, along with **Dizmas** and **Wavorly**.

Hawk Nelson has had its song "Bring 'Em Out" featured on NBC's *Sunday Night Football* spots lately. The band will soon hit the *Revolve Tour*. They have also been hard at work on their third studio project, due in 2008.

The Chariot has launched their own Chariot-vision channel on youtube.com, where they've posted a whole series of videos, seven episodes in total including live footage from their performance at Cornerstone IL, and deleted scenes from their travels on the headlining tour with The Human Abstract and Misery Signals.

Our Heart's Hero will join **Stellar Kart**, **Nevertheless**, and **Eleventyseven** for this holiday season's *Punk The Halls Tour*.

To read the entire I, Sleepwalker interview, go to hmmag.com

HARDNEWS
Page sixteen

Enough Already!

BY JAMIE LEE RAKE

Funny how one of Christendom's more accomplished purveyors of globally expansive music has a name like a Catholic school nun. But **MARY-KATHRYN** is no joke when it comes to incorporating African and Middle Eastern motifs on her sophomore outing, *Dreams & Visions* (Rhythm House). If the sound of her heavenward odes evoke a hint of mysticism, they're firmly rooted in Scripture and occasional classic hymnody. M-K's devotionally imploring voice completes the package, and I'm itching to hear some club remixes from her. Ditto a live album, where her strengths should flourish all the more.

After the recent multi-CD charity tribute to his songwriting, **PETER CASE** is cutting more folkie goodness himself on *Let Us Now Praise Sleepy John* (Yep Roc). Even by Cases's standards, these tales of fallenness, longing and vagabonding about with the glint of everpresent redemption are minimally accompanied. But Case knows just how to sell them with unpretentious compassion and traditionalist enthusiasm. Listen for guitar and bgv's from his Buddhist buddy, Richard Thompson.

Among commercial country hitmakers in the '70s and '80s, **THE BELLAMY BROTHERS** stood out as odd birds, what with their off-kilter sense of humor, copping reggae and rap influences and exploring the concerns of ageing hippies. Most of those endearingly askew attributes continue on *Jesus Is Coming* (Bellamy Brothers/Curb), Howard and David B.'s first gospel album after a return to the Christianity of their youth. Perhaps a bit Branson-esque, but it's a fun ride there as the bro's risk finger-wagging from some who may disagree with their use of a certain King James Version word to describe the Lord's mood when He returns earthward.

OHMEGA WATTS on his MySpace site lists "hip-hop/funk/psychedelic" as his style. The Lightheaded crew rapper pretty well nailed that right. His second solo album, *Watts Happening* (Ubiquity), weaves his faith throughout his life observations in a flow just this side of a slightly woozy Rakim. That delivery plays against the intelligent tenor of his and his guests' rhymes as it complements his scratch-heavy, mind-messing production. An ear for tropicalia, showtunes and his genre's history serves him well. Budding M.C.'s will be likewise served with the bonus disc of instrumentals.

The cover of **EVERYDAY SUNDAY**'s latest, *Wake Up! Wake Up!* (Inpop) is exactly the kind of thing I'd want to see on an album by some oi-ish punk band like Sham 69 or Cocksparrer: guys screaming in front of a theatre marquee. Cool! The music inside? Hardly raw as the aforementioned Britons, but for frothy power-pop goodness ala' a Berserkley Records compilation with enough verbal holiness (in addition to their name) to get them cCm radio play, a body could do plenty worse.

Got the catholicity of my tastes by now? Feed them with music that's good, godly and different enough from everything else you read about herein by sending them to P.O. Box 29; Waupun, WI 53963-0029 U.S.A. CD's, tapes and vinyl are dandy. Downloads and wax cylinders? Not so much. Toodles!

News bullets

The Awakening is touring the USA again. Dates range from mid-October through the end of the month, hitting Nashville, Illinois, and the Southeast.

The Art Union Group has released *Away With the Swine* by **This Beautiful Mess** in Japan and the USA, adding 4 brand new songs. The songs were outtakes of the original *Temper...* recordings.

Sally Forthe has released *The Sally TEN!* DVD, featuring some unreleased live videos and footage from **Selfmindead**; as well as This Beautiful Mess; **The Lionheart Brothers**; **Campsite**; **The Spirit That Guides Us**; **The Hot Stewards**; **Blackstrap**; **Magnusson Arrived From Fjörnebö**; and **Soapbox**.

Dan Haseltine, lead vocalist and primary lyricist for **Jars of Clay**, will release his first book through the award-winning children's book publisher, Mackinac Island Press. Haseltine has connected with millions of fans through Jars of Clay and is hoping to reach an even younger audience through his new book, *The One, The Only, Magnificent Me.* "I wrote *Magnificent Me* because there is nothing more rewarding than fostering the imagination of a child," shares an enthusiastic Haseltine. "It is so important in setting up a person's capacity to dream bigger and live more passionately. Ideas that change the world come from people who have been given permission to think about a world far beyond our physical limitations. I wanted to write a book that reminded children that they are amazing and wonderful, and it has everything to do with them being alive, and having a heart and a mind and a soul. All children need to know that they are magnificent – with or without feathers." Jars of Clay will be out on a Christmas Offerings Tour with **Third Day**.

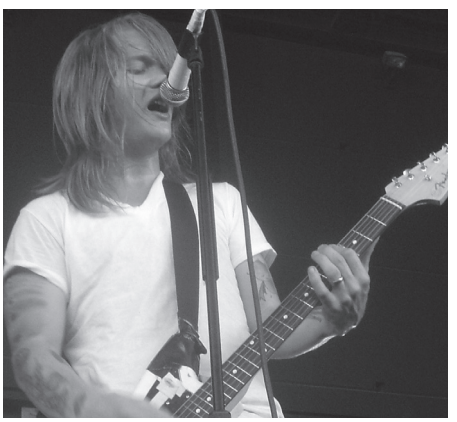
Following in the footsteps of their Oregon predecessors (Falling Up, The Send), **A Dream Too Late** (from Albany) recently signed to Tooth & Nail Records. Leaping out of the gates with an already impressive tour history (Run Kid Run, The Send, Ruth, Falling Up), A Dream Too Late will hit the road with starry eyes and beautiful new album, *Intermission To The Moon*, in stores 11/6/07.

LIVE REPORT

Van's Warped Tour 2007
July 13

BY DOUG VAN PELT

SELMA, TX – The craftily-run festival known as Warped Tour once again re-visited its familiar grounds at the Verizon Wireless Amphitheater outside of hot and sunny San Antonio, Texas. Unlike previous years, where the multiple stages, merch booths and all other activities were spread out in the fenced-in parking lot and sidewalk of this sprawling outdoor venue; this time they actually used the covered stage as one of the official locations. The appreciated pavilion roof and large stage was home to both the Smartpunk.com stage and the Hurley.com stage, which utilized a side-by-side setup to keep the sets running in a precise time table.



While it's not really much to ask for people to catch shows from 11 am to nearly 9 pm, try telling that to the thousands of kids battling heat exhaustion and sun stroke as they moved frenetically to the tunes and then migrated to the next great stage for more of the same. Our journey from Austin was blamed for missing three potentially great sets by Tyler Read, Amber Pacific, and Play Radio Play. But what the HM crew was able to see, though, was loads of fun.

The Almost played a quick 30-minute set in mid-afternoon that was quite packed and appreciated by fans that you could tell (by their singing along and reaction to song intros) have been digging the Southern Weather album most of the summer. Prior to their last and most-anticipated song, "Say This Sooner," the multi-instrumentalist extraordinaire Aaron Gillespie told the audience, "No matter how you felt when you got up today, no matter how far you drove, you are special and Jesus loves you."

Red Jumpsuit Apparatus serenaded their sun-baked audience with lots of energy. Their two big radio singles, "Face Down" and the acoustic-oriented "Your Guardian Angel" sounded really good. Prior to their set, three of the guys, Ronnie, Joey and Duke, gave a cool short interview to us for the HM Podcast.

As Cities Burn sang the worshipful "Empire" and "This Is It, This Is It." They seemed slightly heavier live than their new album would let on.

Like they are known for, the energetic set by **Family Force 5** was non-stop fun. I noticed their guitarist throw his guitar pick up, bounce it high off the guitar, and then catch it in midair just in time for the next down stroke. Near the end of their set, they casually told the audience, "Family Force 5 loves you ... and Jesus Christ loves you more!"

Paramore played to a large and packed outdoor crowd on the 13 Stage. It was impressive to see all the stages run so efficiently, as stage hands kept in touch with each other via radio, only starting the intro music for this performance when that big second hand matched the posted set time. Paramore ate up the audience's energy and practically sparkled back with constant movement and killer sound that was at times cutting and melodically beautiful.

Anberlin sounded absolutely fabulous. This was such a welcome relief after hearing their set at Cornerstone previously in the summer. If Stephen Christian's voice is not front and center over the mix, they just don't sound like Anberlin; and this performance showcased (mostly) those great songs from *Cities* so perfectly. Smiling was easy.

Haste The Day had a nice second-to-last slot on the Smartpunk Stage. After a loud and heavy set, they left the audience with: "No matter what you've done, no matter who you are, Jesus Christ loves you very much." This showed that *Warped Tour* was truly a diverse event that practiced true tolerance, which is cool to see.

Clockwise from top: Family Force 5 gets all Transformer-like; Paramore's Hayley Williams; Anberlin's Stephen Christian; As Cities Burn adding some hip-hop flava; and Aaron Gillespie of The Almost [Photos: DVP]

PANTOKRATOR

Photo: Lina Holström

BY LOYD HARP

How many times have we heard the cliche, "[Fill in undeserving metal band here] are set to dominate the metal world!" Pantokrator can actually do that, if they can get the exposure they deserve. The band formed in 1996 and have been storming the gates ever since.

In the past decade and a half, the hard music scene has changed drastically. Metal went underground again, hardcore came above ground, then hardcore became dominated by metal (still is) and now metal is making its own comeback. In the battle between the two dominant forms of heavy metal, the icy lands of Scandinavia, and Sweden in particular, have played a crucial role. Bands like At the Gates and In Flames were metal bands whose melodic death metal style influenced a host of American hardcore metal bands and birthed a new genre: metalcore. In turn, hardcore influenced metal as well and was re-injected into the sound of aforementioned In Flames and even Immortal Souls' new material.

But for Pantokrator, in the cosmic war of hardcore vs. metal, "hardcore lost every battle." Rickard Gustafsson goes on, "In the beginning we were influenced a lot by Deliverance, Tourniquet, old Mortification and Paramaecium. Later, Swedish folk music came to play a part of our sound. Now we just write whatever comes to our minds. We listen to a lot of different music, but we hate most mainstream radio music. These influences are then transformed through magic into the musical sound that is Pantokrator."

If you think he's kidding about the magical transformation, perhaps you haven't heard *Aurum*, the band's latest offering on Germany's Whirlwind Records. The record is a continuation of the band's death metal style, infused with lots of melody in the right places. The album is a concept-album (a technique the band has utilized since their first independently-released EP), this time focusing on the "mysteries of the biblical canon and at some extent also the Apocrypha. We like to create songs that are powerful and emotional, both lyrically and musically."

Band vocalist, Karl Walfridsson is also responsible for the lyrics, and the themes that accompany. Rickard adds, "Karl can talk religion for hours." While their faith is very apparent in their lyrics, the band doesn't consider what they do 'preaching.' "People here aren't receptive to that. That might work in other countries, but not here." But at the same time, Pantokrator is "a band that claims freedom of speech, hence we do not like any restrictions in expressions of the faith." It is this approach that is helping them win fans among believers and non-believers alike.

When asked about Pantokrator's role in the metal scene, Christian- or non-, Rickard gets inspired. "Our home base is on the East coast of Southern Sweden, the Christian scene there is weak or almost nonexistent. But, in Sweden as a whole, it's quite strong. The metal scene in Sweden is very big. There are many metalheads, but still most of the shows are usually in the larger cities – Stockholm, Gothenburg, Malmö. And there are a lot of bands. It's like everyone has a band, but most of them never come that far. Christian bands are most often not very well known outside the Christian scene, and often it feels like the Christian bands are playing only for the Christian crowd. The 'secular' scene is often skeptical to Christian bands, just because they are Christian. At the same time, we have been quite well received when we have played 'secular' shows, such as the Gates of Metal festival in 2005, with bands such as Dimmu Borgir. We also 'tricked' the audience into singing that Lucifer was 'Fallen! Fallen!' which was quite funny."

It is clear to this writer, that as Pantokrator has worked hard to hone their craft, i.e. dominating the metal, that God has given them favor in the scene. As for the future of the band, Pantokrator is taking it one step at a time. "Right now we want to spread *Aurum* to the world, and play live as much as possible. A U.S. tour would be nice. We already have plans for a couple of future albums. Names and themes are more or less set already, and we are writing new songs." Here's hoping for that U.S. tour!

pantokrator.com

Lucifer was fallen! Fallen!

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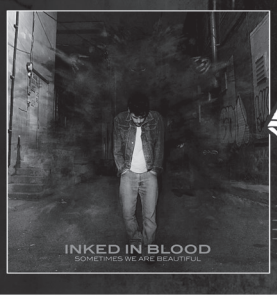

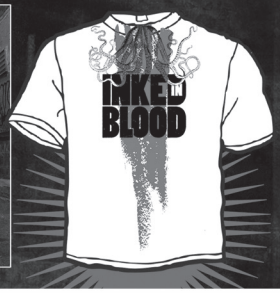

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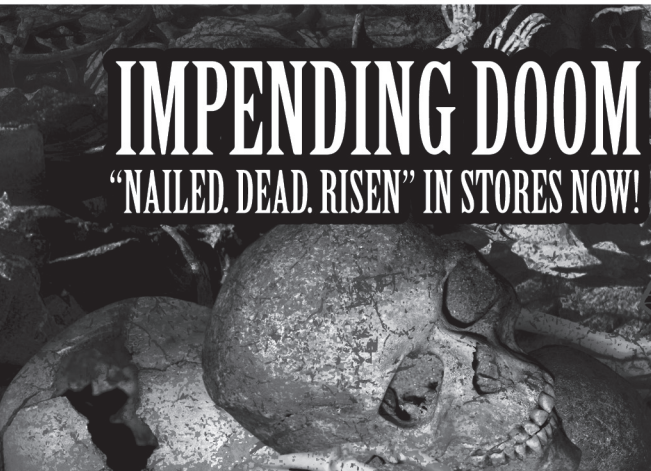

IMMORTAL SOULS

BY CHRIS BECK

The Gothenburg metal sound has been around since the early 1990s, and though there have been long arguments about which band was actually the first to play this style of music, the scene has evolved over time and still remains popular today. The albums *Wintereich* by Immortal Souls and *Aurum* by Pantokrator are two recent entrants into the annals of Gothenburg metal. Another case of Christian bands following a trend? Hardly, as these two talented bands have created albums that are good enough to stand on their own and be relevant within the scene. We recently caught up with Finland's Immortal Souls to discuss their new album and get their take on where they fit within this musical sub-genre.

Chris Beck: Your new album, *Wintereich*, is your first full length album in a few years. What were your goals in making this album?
Aki Sarkioja: Our goal was to make this our best album yet, and we got that done. Composing, arranging, playing – everything was done with the ambition to get the band to the next level.

***Wintereich* is an opus split into four parts. Why did you create an album like this?**
It's an idea that I have had for a while now, and these songs and the lyrical theme gave us the opportunity to make it all possible. This album is a journey, with different moods and events, and to emphasize this I chose to categorize the events into chapters. The basic idea of the album is that you are following a book; with every chapter the journey continues.

As in the past, many of the songs on *Wintereich* take things that people deal with in life – emptiness, pain, etc. – and relate them to winter and its qualities. How do you approach writing song lyrics like this?
It always comes from something in my own life – events that happen to me or someone near to me, something I've read and stuff like that. I have a thing for allegory and hidden meanings, and I just love wintertime, so our lyrics come highly influenced with this theme.

Your music fits well into the Gothenburg metal category, which is still very popular today due to bands such as Children of Bodom, etc. What do you see as Immortal Souls' role within this particular scene?
We are highly inspired by early Gothenburg metal, and Children of Bodom for sure, but we're also inspired by good old heavy metal of the '80s. I don't know our exact place in this scene, but for sure there aren't many bands that have combined winter and Christian themes with death metal music into the Gothenburg sound since 1997.

Immortal Souls started back in 1991. Has your musical career progressed as you expected it would? Any major surprises?
In 1991 when we started, we were just having fun and playing to ourselves. Everything that has happened to us since then has been a positive surprise, as we have always tried to have fun and play the kind of music that we love. Three albums and a few other recordings later, I can't believe what has happened. I can only thank our fans for keeping the band alive.

Immortal Souls has written many songs since your beginning. Looking back, what one or two songs are your favorite and why?
I think "Divine Wintertime" is one of my early favorites, as it was one of the first fast melodic songs that I have written. Also, "Nightfrost" from the *Wintereich* album. It is one of my most recent songs, but the song has some of the same atmosphere that we had back in 1998 when we recorded the *Divine Wintertime* EP.

immortalsouls.com

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WILL THE CIRCLE BE UN*Spoken*

BY STEVEN DOUGLAS LOSEY

"I hate to say this but for the first time in a very long time I actually feel momentum building behind this band."

–Jeff Cunningham
Guitarist for Spoken

So it goes for Spoken, with three national releases for Tooth and Nail, hundreds of shows and band members with day jobs, Spoken feels like the stars may finally be aligning to reach the next level. It's not that the band hasn't tried. Over the past eleven years Spoken has scored several songs in the Top Twenty and played the biggest festivals. Despite critical success with 2003's *A Moment of Imperfect Clarity,* the band has yet to reach the masses like their Christian counterparts in bands like Pillar and Skillet. The question that immediately comes to mind is ... why? "We've been asking ourselves that for a very long time," says guitarist Jeff Cunningham. "We're contemporaries with all of those bands and have played with them several times, but we've made some very horrible decisions business-wise and haven't yet connected in a way those bands have."

It's been two years, now with the release of their self-titled opus, Spoken has decided to play music for the fans and – most importantly – the music that they truly wanted to make this time out. There are no ulterior motives, no accommodations being made and no writing hit songs for radio. "We quit trying to cater to Christian rock radio," Cunningham says. "When you're a band at our level it doesn't matter if we have a number one song or not. The fact is there's only something like 52 stations spinning rock radio. What matters is that we write what we like and what people connect with."

Some would say – especially hardcore Spoken fans – that the band played it safe on the past couple of records. While the discs featured heavy grooves and melodic moments, the soul seemed to be lacking in spots. "This record isn't safe," says Cunningham. "It definitely takes some chances. We experimented with some different tunings. The heavier moments seem heavier and there are even some softer moments with almost no guitars."

While Spoken's earlier records were their heaviest by far, they've definitely progressed in their sound and musicianship over the past eleven years. Stylistically, the band has flirted with screamo, alternative, and melodic metal through the years. On the latest disc they just wrote from the heart, offering up grooves based on vibes, with no pretense holding back the creative process. "Everything we've done here is entirely honest," says Cunningham. "The songs are better and there's more intensity in the music. I think it's the version of Spoken that people have always connected with."

In a glut of genre sameness it seems like bands on both the secular side and the Christian side have been mixing screaming with melodic vibes. The style has been growing in leaps and bounds with groups like Red Jumpsuit Apparatus and others leading the way. So the question has to be asked: What makes Spoken different? What sets them apart from the pack in 2007? "I've always felt like we've had our own unique stamp going on. We don't immediately sound like anything that's out there. Most of it is the chord voicings and the way Matt sings. There's usually no mistaking that it's us and that's how we like it."

✖

Cry of the Afflicted

NON-COINCIDENTAL

BY MATT CONNER

THERE'S NO LONG, DRAWN OUT STORY HERE. THERE'S NO SCENARIO FOR AN ENDLESS *BEHIND THE MUSIC* TYPE DRAMA OF A BAND CLAWING ITS WAY OUT OF ITS OWN PROBLEMS AND THE WORLD AROUND THEM TO MAKE IT. IN FACT, FOR CRY OF THE AFFLICTED, IT WAS AS SIMPLE AS A HANDOFF.

"It was one of those things we like to call a non-coincidental God moment," explains vocalist Garrett Packer via cell phone in Colorado. "James [Johnson], our lead guitar player, went down to *Warped Tour* in Seattle and our manager, Cody, was tour managing Emery at the time. He was introducing James to a few people and James started talking to Jimmy Ryan and at some point he mentioned he worked for Tooth & Nail. So James told him he was in a band and we had some discs with us, so he gave it to Jimmy. Within a couple days, Jimmy had contacted us and had showed some people at the label, who were excited. That's about it. Within the week, they had put us onto an Anberlin show in our hometown and it happened from there."

Before this in 2003, the band first came together in their native British Columbia after playing in separate bands. Packer, Johnson and bassist Nik Wagener were already making music when they started jamming with guitarist Steve Lockhart and drummer Troy Doell, who were leaving a former band.

"Steve and Troy had also played in bands in the local scene, so we were familiar with them from that," says Packer. "Troy and Nik were actually the ones that first conceived it and from there they called up James and myself. I called up Steve at Christmastime and it's been the same five guys ever since."

Now armed with Solid State's backing, the quintet turned to Number One Gun's Jeff Schneeweis for production duties. The experience with Schneeweis was helpful, says Packer, who helped fuse together the elements needed.

"That was Jeff's strongest point is that he comes from a pop background, more than anything. Certainly some of us were nervous about that. We were wondering whether we would end up with a pop rocker here. The biggest thing is that he has musical background. He's not just a producer or just a songwriter or just a guitar player. He's a singer and songwriter. He's recorded drum and bass, you name it. So we really tried to work with a guy with those kind of credentials; and lucky for us he turned out to be really good to work with."

Schneeweis' accessible tendencies melded well with Cry of the Afflicted. With a strong penchant for melody, CotA can be an anomaly of sorts in the world of hardcore. But that doesn't dissuade them from following the course they feel they're meant to chart.

"We love that aspect of music and we also love heavy aspects and that's why we throw it all together. When you have five members in a band, there's gonna be opinions on what every part needs. And that's partly why I think it's good we worked with a guy like Jeff. It was important that we had someone we trusted musically and say what was best."

The good news for music fans is that Cry of the Afflicted seized an opportunity when they did. And with the soaring melodies amidst the intense screams and searing riffs, the band hopes you'll soon seize the same opportunity to check them out.

✖

Emery

KEEPING IT IN THE FAMILY

BY DAVID STAGG

DEVIN SHELTON, FROM WHAT I CAN TELL, IS A GUY WITH A SENSE OF HUMOR. I CAN SAFELY ASSUME THIS BECAUSE I CALLED HIM ON SATURDAY, GOT HIS ANSWERING MACHINE, AND HIS MESSAGE TO INCOMING CALLERS WAS HIS NAME, FOLLOWED BY HIS LINEAGE – JUST TO MAKE SURE YOU GOT THE CORRECT LINE OF SHELTONS. I CALLED AGAIN ON MONDAY, GOT HIS ANSWERING MACHINE, AND THIS TIME HE HAD CHANGED IT TO A FALSETTO MELODY LINE. (THE LAST TIME I ACTUALLY CHANGED MY ANSWERING MACHINE MESSAGE HAD TO HAVE BEEN WHEN EVERYONE STILL CARRIED NOKIAS THAT WEIGHED ROUGHLY THE SAME AMOUNT AS A BRICK.) I KIND OF HOPED THAT WHEN I CALLED HIM THE NEXT TIME, I'D GET HIS ANSWERING MACHINE JUST TO SEE WHAT IT WOULD SAY TO ME.

When I finally speak with Shelton, I find that he is, in fact, very affable. He doesn't joke around as much as I thought he would; I assume it's because I'm now talking to him on the record. But through his thick South Carolina accent and short, poignant sentences, he does speak with ease about his band, Emery, and their newest record, *I'm Only a Man*. (Also, for the record, Devin Shelton does answer his phone; he actually answered all the other times I had called him.)

When *I'm Only a Man*, Emery's third full-length record, hits stores, it will have been almost a year since the band's last official release, a special edition of their sophomore record *The Question*, which featured an intense, incredibly well-done acoustic version of one of their biggest songs – "The Ponytail Parades." The acoustic sound seemed to resonate with fans, enough to push the band to set out on an acoustic tour this past July. "It was a whole different thing for us," Shelton says. "It was a lot mellower. We took questions, and it was way more intimate. It was one of our favorite tours to be on. We got to know our fans; they got to ask us questions they wanted to know. It was something totally different, and things like that always stick out to you."

The acoustic sound (and the following tour, as a result) worked out pretty well for the band, partly in fact due to the Emery songwriting process. When Shelton writes a song for the band, it's not like he plugs in an electric and goes to town. He grabs an acoustic, puts together chord progressions and melodies, and later, with the band, translates them into full blown Emery. Bringing the songs off the records and into an acoustic setting proved way more conducive than trying to do it the opposite way.

About the same time of the release of the special edition of *The Question*, the band was beginning to make moves towards what would eventually become *I'm Only a Man*. For about four weeks in November and December, just after *The Question* version 2.0 dropped, Emery (consisting of Shelton, vocalist and guitarist Toby Morell, guitarist Matt Carter, keyboardist Josh Head, and drummer Dave Powell) rented a beach house in Charleston, South Carolina, home to Morell. ("It's pretty cheap [to rent] there in the winter," Shelton says.) There, they set up a recording studio and laid down eight to 10 demo tracks that "gave us a good idea of what we were going for and where we were headed," Shelton says. "That gave us a good time of preparation before having to go in and record."

However, that fall, just before the mini-recording session, the band had a little hang up. Their now-former bassist, Joel Green, was going through a time where he felt like it was time to move on from the band, to do other things. It was affecting friendships, and the enjoyment level of the band was dropping. The band completely understood and parted ways, but instead of trying to fill in the empty bassist spot, Shelton grabbed a bass and started playing. "We just decided to try to keep it within our little family we've got going here," he says. "It just makes it easier."

"How has the transition been for you to bass?" I ask.

"Oh, I really like it," he responds without a beat. "As far as playing live goes, I kind of like it even more than guitar. It's almost a little more important, working with the rhythm section, working with the drums. I like being rhythmically tight, so it's fun for me to try to do that as well as I can."

With the thinner line-up, the band started the actual recording for *I'm Only a Man* with producer Ryan Bush in mid-April in Franklin, TN, just outside of Nashville, kind of out in the country. "We loved it there," Shelton says. "It was a really good time for us. I think it was our most memorable recording experience." The actual title for the record didn't come until later, until after the demo sessions in Charleston and until after the beginning of the recording process; it's always been a little harder for Emery to pull off a conceptual record since they have two main songwriters. Shelton explains: "Sometimes when you try to get some kind of conceptual thing going, a lot of time, because we have two main writers and singers, it's hard. If it were just one, it would be easier to write the lyrics straight through. We're definitely always on the same page musically, though, and still give input on all parts of the process."

Just after that sentence, though, Shelton says what I believe is at the crux of what is most important to the band about their newest record: "What we really wanted to do was achieve an intense, heavy album, but doing it without a bunch of layered, distorted guitars," he says. "We wanted to use really loud drums, and a lot of bass distortion, and just one guitar part since we only have one guitar player now."

"I've actually heard the new record, and I've listened to you guys since *The Weak's End*," I say. "It's definitely a little different."

"Yeah, I know it is," he responds, absolutely. "But now that I hear you say that, you can definitely hear that sound in the new record." He continues: "We just felt like it gets really muddy if you use a lot of distorted guitars and things like that so we wanted to use a lot of piano… We even used a lot of acoustic guitar in the background, because you can hear the percussive aspect of acoustic when you're strumming it."

The point to them is that with the pared down Emery, they're definitely venturing out into a sound that isn't necessarily *The Weak's End* or *The Question*, but if they put out those records again, Shelton agrees it wouldn't be maturing as a band. Instead, they utilized the resources they had and put together a heavy record without actually weighing it down. "We tried a bunch of different things," Shelton says, "and we hope people will get the idea."

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"What we really wanted to do was achieve an intense, heavy album, but doing it without a bunch of layered, distorted guitars..."

SCRIBBLING IDIOTS
THE HAVENOTS

BY BRENTEN GILBERT

SINCE 1996, SCRIBBLE JAM, "AMERICA'S LARGEST HIP-HOP FESTIVAL," CONVENES ANNUALLY IN CINCINNATI AS MEMBERS OF THE HIP-HOP COMMUNITY COME TOGETHER FROM AROUND THE WORLD TO CELEBRATE THE POSITIVE ELEMENTS OF THE HIP-HOP. SCRIBBLE JAM CONTINUALLY PROVES TO BE THE PLACE TO NETWORK WITH OTHER HIP-HOP HEADS, HONE YOUR CRAFT, ENJOY THE NUMEROUS SHOWCASE PERFORMANCES AND COMPETE HEAD TO HEAD WITH OTHERS.

And so it was at Scribble Jam 2002, when JustMe, formerly from the group SolSeekers and recently moved to Kentucky from Southern California, met up with a fan and fellow rapper, Cas Metah. "I had just put out a self-released EP," explains JustMe. "He had some connections to do shows. So, I agreed to help him record music if he agreed to help me get shows."

The two ended up doing a number of shows in the area and when it came time for Cas to record, they decided to try something together. Pleased with the result, the song turned into a full-blown project and on a whim, the name Scribbling Idiots was conceived. "We were both just solo artists," says JustMe, "so we figured we would call it JustMe and Cas Metah are Scribbling Idiots."

The growth continued as Cas continued to build relationships with others in the global hip-hop community. Says JustMe, "Cas is this huge connections guy. He loves to start relationships with people online and with anyone he meets at shows and stuff. So he had all these relationships with producers and emcees all over the country."

Since all these associates were featured in one way or another on the first project, the term Scribbling Idiots expanded to include everyone involved. However, it was the two of them who continued to perform together regularly. The duo eventually asked Mouf Warren, Theory Hazit and Wonder Brown, who were living nearby to join the crew, cementing a five-man core. "Scribbling Idiots is a crew of about eleven or twelve members, but for recording purposes and putting out albums, Scribbling Idiots is these five members," explains JustMe.

In an effort to help establish themselves as a group, the first step was to put together a mixtape. "We put out *Idiomatic Vol. 1* – that was our first mixtape – in 2005," recalls JustMe, "and the buzz sort of grew off of that mixtape." However, as *Idiomatic Vol. 1* spread worldwide around the hip-hop community, the individual members within the group were still recording on their own.

"Everyone had their side projects that [they] were working on," says JustMe. Sure enough, on the heels of the mixtape, Cas Metah released a solo album, *Dimension Tide* (2005), JustMe released *One Man's Trash* (illect recordings, 2006), and Theory Hazit unveiled *Extra Credit* (Hip Hop IS Music, 2007). However, the most rewarding side project involved all five members of the group.

"Sev Statik was doing an EP with Theory Hazit and he called me up to ask if I wanted to work on it with them," says JustMe. "The final project ended up including all the core members of Scribbling Idiots – even if it was one guest appearance." The EP, which released earlier this year, was dubbed the *Falling Tsar* project in honor of a close friend who had recently passed away, leaving behind a son who had been diagnosed with bone cancer and a widow with a financial crisis on her hands. Seeing the project as a chance to help out, the crew agreed to pass along all proceeds to help cover the medical expenses. "[We] just saw that as an opportunity from God to use this music to help someone in need, to actually minister to a need."

Despite all the side projects, a group album was always in the works. With the objective of making "great music that is glorifying to God and edifying to the listener," the crew set out in 2005 to create an album that was "classic." As a group, they agreed to take the best beats and the best concepts and focus on the group album. "There were times when we would hear something that one of us did on a solo project," recalls JustMe with a chuckle. "We would all go, 'What? How come that wasn't for the group album?'"

The first iteration of a group album was titled *Spitting Images* – a play on being created in God's image – which they shopped around to labels in early 2006. "Illect probably would've released that record as is, but we weren't happy with it," says JustMe. "So we scrapped half of that record, picked the best songs, and built off of that to finish what ended up being *The Have Nots*.

Releasing this fall, *The Have Nots* "deals a lot with what we see in everyday life and giving a voice to the people who are without a voice," describes JustMe. "It speaks to the people who are down and out and maybe have lost hope. [It's about] giving hope to those who have lost hope and showing them that our hope is in Christ."

The title track on the album offers an anthemic chorus that encourages listeners to appreciate what they have, but the album title also stems from John 20, where Jesus blesses those who have not seen, but still believe. "We have not seen the risen Christ, but we still believe," shares JustMe. "We're the Have Nots."

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BEATS

[hip-hop news 'n' reviews by SphereofHipHop. com]

News shorts…

Ohmega Watts is back with a brand new record full of funky beats and fresh rhymes. His new album, ***Watts Happening,*** is out now on Ubiquity Recordings. If you are a fan of Lightheaded or his debut, check for this wherever you buy your hip-hop. (myspace.com/ohmegawatts)

Ajax Starglider is truly a creative wonder. Count on hearing things you've never heard before and also some of what you have from his Future Shock days. On his new album ***Middle Class Broadcast,*** Ajax brings along some guests including: **Future Shock**, **Theory Hazit**, **Locke**, **Braille**, **JustMe**, **Sintax the Terrific**, **Mouth Warren** and others. Out now on Illect Recordings. (illect.com / myspace.com/illectrecordings)

Sev Statik and **DJ Dust**'s new collaborative project, ***Back to Dust,*** is out now on Rawkus 50. This record features those grimy beats from Dust (**Mars ILL**) and the on point rhymes of Sev Statik. The guest list is also quite impressive: **Manchild**, **Playdough**, **Elias**, **LMNO**, Theory Hazit, **Raphi**, **Cas Metah**, **Motion Plus** and several others. It's available as a digital download, but for those that gotta have a CD copy, SphereofhiphopStore.com is one of the few retailers carrying the hard copy. (myspace.com/sumoraps)

DJ Aslan is back with two new mixtape projects. The first is the start of a mixtape series for Illect Recordings that features the hottest tracks from their current releases. The second is the continuation of the Sphere of Hip-Hop mixtape series. (myspace.com/aslansounds)

Looks like pioneering artist **Peace 586** is back in the mix making music. Catch up with him and hear some new cuts online. (myspace.com/peacefiveeightysix)

Playdough has a brand new music video out for 'Ghetto Blaster'. It's animated and one of the cooler videos we have seen in a while. (SphereofhiphopTV.com)

Gotee Records recently released the definitive **GRITS** double-disc collection, ***Greatest Hits***, with 30 songs by the hip-hop duo, 11 of which are previously unreleased tracks. (Gotee.com)

Songwriting

I LOVE THAT SONG. WHO WROTE IT?

BY RACHEL HAUCK

A COUPLE OF YEARS AGO MY AGENT SUGGESTED I WRITE A BOOK ABOUT A WANNABE SONGWRITER. YOU KNOW, THE YOUNG WOMAN COMING OF AGE, ACHIEVING HER DREAM. DESPERATE TO REALIZE MY OWN DREAM, I LEAPT IN TO THE IDEA DEAF, DUMB AND BLIND. "I LOVE MUSIC. I'LL DO IT," EVEN THOUGH WHAT I KNEW ABOUT SONGWRITING COULD FIT IN THE PROVERBIAL THIMBLE WITH ROOM TO SPARE.

As a worship leader, I'd attempted to write a song on occasion. I mean how hard can it be? I'm a writer and singer for crying out loud. Two minutes into it, I discovered songwriting is hard. Listen, if there are any recording artists or song publishers looking for a repetitive piece where every line rhymes with king, thing or ring, I'm their girl. See me at rachelhauck.com.

Songwriting, like most arts and craft, requires some measure of talent and a whole lot of work. As I started the story of Robin McAfee in "Lost In NashVegas," I discovered "faking" the world of a songwriter was impossible. I had to delve into this elusive and hidden aspect of the music industry.

Googling and forum messaging coughed up little if any concrete information. Random emails sent to songwriters or industry people yielded zippo. Go figure. They're busy. I can relate.

Next, I did what all great writers of songs and novels do, I procrastinated and fretted. How do I make this character's journey real? Authentic? How exactly does one become a songwriter? Who are the creative minds and lyrics behind the songs we love?

After my procrastination tarried too long, I took action, packed my convertible VW and headed to Nashville. Whether you like jazz, grunge, emo, rock, country, pop or alternative music, Nashville is one of the worlds hottest music centers. Land of the legends.

Not only can one learn the craft of songwriting, but the down home, all-are-welcomed atmosphere makes Nashville, or NashVegas as the locals say, a great place to network. The city's music and cultural scene is vast.

Here are some truths I learned on my journey into the life of a songwriter.

Talent is great, but networking even greater. Aspiring songwriters should move to cities where their music can be heard by key industry people.

Organizations like NSAI, (Nashville Songwriters Association International,) songwriter and musician societies such as ASCAP, BMI or SESAC offer professional services, workshops and critiques. Joining one of these groups is the first step to becoming a serious songwriter.

"Years ago, I had a professional critique at ASCAP," said one time aspiring songwriter L. Young. "Two lines into the song, the Pro said, 'Doesn't grab me. Come back when you have three new songs.'" Songwriting isn't for the faint hearted.

Songwriters gather. Many co-write together, combining ideas, talent, experience and connections.

Songwriters need to be where their songs can be heard. Big Name Artist isn't usually looking for their next big hit by loitering on a Manhattan or Nashville street corner.

New material is presented to artists, labels and producers via song pluggers who work for publishers.

Open Mike Nights are a great place to try new material. Nashville's Bluebird Café is tops among songwriter havens for the new and experienced. On my first night at the Bluebird, a man I never heard of sang one of the biggest country hits of the '70s, "Don't It Make My Brown Eyes Blue." For my afraid-to-sing-in-front-of-people heroine, I figured the Bluebird's open mike night was the perfect place for Robin to break the Nashville ice. On a Monday night at the 'Bird, I heard every musical style from Hank Williams country to rock, to pop, to some kind of Kung Fu fighting number.

Serious songwriters attend workshops to learn craft and network. They book gigs at café's, coffee shops, even someone's living room. During this research trip, a friend and I attended a songwriters night at a private residence. In the back of the house, the family built a large listening room equipped with sound and stage lights. The songwriters sang "in a row" at the front of the room.

"Drive and perseverance is the number one requirement for a songwriter," said song publisher, Ree Guyer Buchanan. After braving open mike night, professional critiques, and spending time working the craft, a songwriter presents her material to a publisher. Seeing the potential, perhaps the publisher signs her to a three-year deal. The songwriter earns a draw off future earnings. That's when the pluggers get busy, pitching material to producers and artists. One hit, and she could be set for life. Especially if a song becomes a cover band favorite.

But money-making hits can be far and few between. And many don't write for the chart-topper, but to express their heart and life through song. In the mean time, she's working a day job, waiting tables, cleaning offices.

There's a joke in Nashville. "What's the number one thing all songwriters ask?" Answer: "Can I take your order?"

Did I mention songwriting is not for the faint hearted?

But finally, finally, the call comes. Big Name Artist has put the writer's song on hold. Wait, don't celebrate the good times yet. A song on hold merely means the artist and producer like it. They may have a hundred songs on hold. Only a dozen will go on the album. A few months later, the songwriter hears, "Big Name Artist cut your song last night." Now celebrate the good times? Not yet. Cutting a song still doesn't mean it'll make the album.

Meanwhile, she's still asking a lot of people, "Can I take your order?" At last, she learns, "You made the cut. Your song is on the album." Maybe even, as happened to one songwriter I met, "Your song is the title single release." Now, she can celebrate the good times.

Not so fast. "My song was the title release on a major artist album," said one Nashville-based songwriter. "The album was coming out the following Tuesday. Monday, I got a call telling me the artist cut a new song over the weekend and my song was off the album."

"Wait," I said. "Off the album? You were the first single release and in a manner of days, your song wasn't even on the album."

"Not even on the album."

Songwriter Craig Monday said, "Nashville's a nine-year town." Meccas like New York or L.A. may take even longer to break in. The fast success of the chick in "Coyote Ugly" was definitely the Hollywood version.

So next time you're belting out the lyrics of your favorite tune in the shower, or encouraging a friend with lyrics like, "It's a beautiful thing / Whoo-hoo-hoo," remember the writer behind the song and the sacrifice it took to achieve the dream.

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"songwriting is not for the faint hearted..."

Demon Hunter

OPENING UP THE FIERY GATES

BY STEVEN DOUGLAS LOSEY

IT'S WHEN BLOOD'S DRIPPING OUT OF YOUR FACE AND YOUR NOSE HAS BEEN BEATEN. WHEN YOUR TOOTH IS CHIPPED, YOU'VE LOST A SHOE, YOUR CONSCIOUSNESS AND YOUR WALLET. THAT'S WHEN YOU ARE STANDING IN A DEMON HUNTER PIT.

These are fans that have put up with abuse in the form of minimal tours, shows, and appearances. They've driven, they've waited, they've persevered; but, most importantly, they anticipate the day they will see their band again.

Now there is reason for the Blessed Resistance to celebrate. With the release of their fourth opus, Demon Hunter is back with *Storm the Gates of Hell*. Metal is raising a fist, fans their lighters, parents an eyebrow and Demon Hunter some serious hell from the stage.

It isn't a secret who 'these' fans are. With the heavy metal thunder of the KISS Army, the Blessed Resistance forges forward patiently waiting on their band. From the beginning they have been fervent and fanatic. "We've seen tanks over in Iraq with our logo spray painted on the side," says vocalist Ryan Clark. "There's a German fan who wrote "F" the devil on the hood of their car. It was covered with a bunch of Demon Hunter stickers. I don't know if they understood just how harsh the "F" word is in English."

The band has always been about the fans. They play for these kids, but when they can't play, they release a lot of material; *Storm the Gates of Hell* is the band's fourth record in five years. Clark realizes there have been droughts at times, but is emphatic when discussing the extra lengths the band goes through for the faithful. "We've always tried to do things in other ways," Clark says. "We correspond through our website; we do as many videos as we can. We try to stay active in ways that we don't have to be on the road."

So Demon Hunter records on, *Storm the Gates of Hell* is a defining moment for them. It literally brings truth to a lost generation. "It's amazing how blatant the record is in terms of our faith," Clark states. "There's a song on the special edition called "Grand Finale" that I wrote some Revelation type lyrics. I think this record is pretty eclectic. When you listen all the way through you have to be able to listen to both the ups and downs from heavy to mellow."
Storm the Gates of Hell isn't subtle. As the band has matured and grown, so has their faith and their stance, so why hide it? With the release, Clark and company rile up demons with barefaced theological truth and relentless fervor. "We're bringing a true message of Christ to an otherwise lost scene," Clark adds. "I think it's a misconception that all metal-heads and rock and rollers are messed up or come from the wrong side of the tracks. There is a lot of pain and reasons why people get into that type of music to begin with. I think we are a breath of fresh air on the other side of what other bands are teaching and preaching."

While the band's heaviest songs, like "Lead Us Home," finds them experimenting with blast beats; other tunes, like "Carry Me Down," echo more of an earthy vibe. "There are a lot of acoustic things going on all over that song," Clark injects. "We put all acoustics in the versus and

Photos: David Stuart

r.a

completely left out the screaming this time."

Part of the band's new found sound is partly due to the guitar expertise of former Revolution Smile guitarist and producer Shaun Lopez. Lopez has been friends with the band for several years. "He came in to help with a lot of different guitars and amps," Clark remembers. "The guitar tones on this record are vastly different this time out. A lot of the inspiration came from the Slipknot record. It's not overly distorted, but has a clean yet bitey and aggressive sound to it." As Lopez helped to right the guitar sound, the band decided to be minimalists in the studio whenever possible. "We just did two guitar tracks, left and right," Clark remembers. "We didn't clutter up anything, but it still bites a lot harder than the majority of our other stuff."

There is no doubt that Demon Hunter exists in a real world of anti-God, anti-Christian, and anti-establishment sentiment. That's why they refute the Slipknots' and the Manson's messages at every turn. Their stance on these bands and what they preach is a complex one. Clark is a fan of some; while others, like Slayer, have less appeal to him. Demon Hunter's stance on these bands is definitely the biggest question they get from their fans. "It's about a personal conviction for me," he says. "I'm not the kind of guy who would burn his CD collection after a summer at Christian Camp. It's just never been that way for me. If you get a bad vibe don't listen to it."

Talking to Clark in depth about some bands being inherently evil or not is interesting verbiage. One statement he's heard over the years is: "Something is either for God or against Him." Some say there is really not a gray area, so how do the Christians in this band justify Slipknot or the like? Clark asks, "Is eating this carrot for or against God? I think songs by themselves can be very neutral things in terms of spirituality."
While Clark makes sense, how does he react to Manson proclaiming to be an *Antichrist Superstar* or Slayer boasting their theology on a record like *Christ Illusion*? Many would say, "Where's the truth in that? How can a human being much less a Christian benefit from blasphemy?"

"A Manson fan was telling me that when he listens to that music, he realizes how alone artists like that really are," Clark says. "To write those lyrics, he must have felt incredibly alienated. From a Christian perspective that is enlightening and gives me an insight into people that listen to him."

continued on page 67

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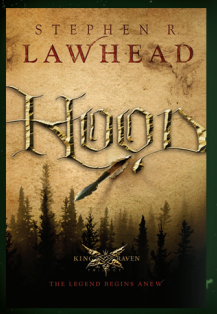

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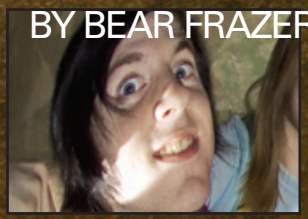
The Devil Wears Prada

WELL WHOOP-DE-DO

BY BEAR FRAZER



Live photo: Kelly Benson

IT'S BEEN MEMORABLE SUMMER FOR MIKE HRANICA. AFTER GRADUATING HIGH SCHOOL, HE ADDED THE FINISHING TOUCHES TO THE DEVIL WEARS PRADA'S SOPHOMORE SET *PLAGUE* AND THEN, PARTOOK IN THE *SOUNDS OF THE UNDERGROUND TOUR*.

But with the dog days of summer coming to a close, Hranica spends this August afternoon relaxing at his girlfriend's apartment in Cincinnati, Ohio. As he begins to reflect on his touring experience, he comes to a realization. "I don't think we're really that metal," the 18 year-old vocalist states. "We just finished the *Sounds of the Underground* and a lot of, like, real metalheads didn't like us at all."

That may sound discouraging, but Hranica isn't particularly offended. He still prefers the metalcore resonance The Devil Wears Prada is known for and they don't alter their style for anyone on *Plague*. Instead, they amplify their musicianship. "A lot of bands change their sound after their first record. Their second CD sounds like nothing before it. Bands always say, 'We don't wanna sound the same for all these records.' Well that's not how we are," he explains. "We're still sticking to the same thing, trying to mature and expanding on it. It's still the same genre in every way and it's still the same band."

Relatively little has changed since forming back in Dayton, Ohio in 2005. The roots of The Devil Wears Prada started with a simple conversation over AOL Instant Messenger between lead guitarist Chris Rubey and drummer Dan Williams. Over the next few months, the rest of the members entered the fold with vocalist Hranica, rhythm guitarist Jeremy DePoyster, bassist Andy Trick and keyboardist James Baney. They immediately recorded their self-financed EP *Patterns of Horizon* just to sell at shows, but after a few emails between the band and Rise Records, they found a label home.

Everything became much easier. Instead of making an album from scratch, The Devil Wears Prada took all of the songs from their EP and wrote two additional tracks ("Dogs Can Grow Beards All Over" and "Texas Is South"), which comprised their full-length debut *Dear Love, A Beautiful Dischord*. Though they weren't pressed for time, the Ohio sextet was anxious to unveil their glorious achievement.

"There was pressure as far as we wanted to get out the record as fast as possible, but we were all pretty comfortable. I wouldn't say it was like super pressure. We were all kids doing it, so we weren't too stressed about it," Hranica explains. "Now looking back at it, we think a lot of the old material wasn't very good. Personally, I think the old stuff is pretty crappy."

Fortunately, he is more positive about their follow-up, *Plague*. The Devil Wears Prada continues feeding the masses excruciating melodies with a theatrical twist, but they also strengthen their musicianship with creative riffs and polished production. Hranica also expands his lyrical arsenal by zeroing in on worldly issues such as humility, pride and materialism with highlights coming in the form of "Hey John, What's Your Name Again," "HTML Rulez d00d" and "Nickels Is Money Too."

Although they are a spiritual bunch of metalcore enthusiasts, they aren't necessarily fond of being tagged Christian metal. "Sometimes, it gives off the stereotype as far as a lot of people don't like the church, and we're not 100% on what the church does nowadays either," Hranica says. "It sucks having the negative stereotype, because we like to think of ourselves as people who have a strong relationship with God. Not like some throat-stuffing church goer."

Perhaps one listen to *Plague* will help wash that perception away.

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The Showdown

DOES OZZFEST

BY DOUG VAN PELT

Photos: DVP

"WE'VE BEEN LISTENING TO A LOT OF EARLY DISCIPLE," REPORTS RILEY ANGLEN, THE SHOWDOWN'S SOUTHERN-FRIENDLY AND ÜBER-CAPABLE ROAD MANAGER. "I'M NOT SURE WHY, BUT THAT'S WHAT WE'VE BEEN JAMMIN' TO WHEN WE PULL UP TO THE GROUNDS LATELY. THERE'S ALL THIS OTHER STUFF GOING ON, AND WE'RE ALL ROCKING, "I JUST KNOW JESUS IS THE WAY, I JUST KNOW JESUS IS THE TRUTH, I JUST KNOW JESUS IS THE LIFE..."

Maybe it's the realization that, whether they like it or not, they stand out in a tribal crowd of metal freaks that caravan from one large city to another like a musical circus. Having their center in something that won't move has invariably kept the band together on this craziest of all tours. "The best part about it is the shows," admits vocalist David Bunton. "It's been, like, the most trying and tiring tour we've ever done." This, apparently, is an understatement of immense patience, as the band wrestled with an old van that kept them physically on top of one another, an RV that broke down, a loaner bus from Pillar, and another RV that was falling apart. The band was near their boiling point. "Mentally," describes guitarist Travis Bailey, "we were ready to take it to the house. Load-ins at 7 am, 100-degree heat... We were physically ready to fight each other." They sat down and prayed about it and it was that very night that Pillar's bus comes through. They pulled in for the next day's show just ten minutes before they were to be onstage. "That was killer, because everyone was, 'You've *got* to have somebody on your side!' That's the first time we've seen God go, 'Boom! There you go. You asked for it, you get it.'"

"It's been by far the most surreal month of my life," explains guitarist Josh Childers. "This has not been real life. There's been 20 minutes a day where it's been the best experience of all my experiences. Playing for 10,000 kids is unbelievable, but the other 23 hours and 40 minutes of every day have been ... if something can go wrong, it has. Obviously, somebody doesn't want us doing this."

"As far as the shows," adds Bunton, "people seem really excited about us – and there's only about five people in the crowd that actually know who we are." From the first song ("Temptation Come My Way") the band had the crowd right with them, rocking along, hands held high and roaring with approval after each new number. They ripped through explosive, heavy and tough performances of "Fanatics and Whores" and "Six Feet Under," and then they did something to endear them to the entire Ozzfest audience – they went into a classic metal medley with no announcements and no introductions – "Creeping Death" into "Sad But True" into "Cowboys From Hell" and "Walk" and wrapping up with "Wherever I May Roam." Not every band can pull this off (or should even try), but The Showdown did in fine fashion. As those familiar and monster riffs washed over the crowd, the band made several thousand new friends. To cap off a short Stage Two 20-minute set, they ended with another one of their own, "Breath of the Swamp." Then it was time to say goodbye and the road crew jumped in to wheel off their cabinets for the 2.5 minute set change, while the crowd screamed and whistled their approval for a new band they were writing into their memories.

It's not only the fans that are becoming new friends, but their fellow travelling companions, as well. "Dude! I made friends with Behemoth!" shouts Bailey with glee. "The guys from Behemoth wanted to challenge The Showdown in a game of football, calling it 'the ultimate game of good and evil.'" Like much of the modern music world, diversity is in and uptight-ness is right out. Once they showed that they were regular guys, the outward tension was gone.

"I've had discussions with the dudes from Ankla and the dudes from Three Inches Of Blood," adds Childers, matter-of-factly. "And they've all been super cool. Like, the singer from Three Inches of Blood has a Baphomet tattoo on the back of his leg, but here we are sitting here talking about what we believe in. Everyone is just really chill about everything. 'You can believe what you want, bro, as long as you're hanging out and you're not trying to pass judgment on somebody.' The guys in Behemoth are nice! I had about a half-hour discussion with them before they realized I was in The Showdown, and it didn't change after they found out."

"Every day here is so different than the normal world," reiterates Bunton, which is another understatement. With half-woman/half-men around from the Brothers Grimm Sideshow to topless girls perched atop their just-as-clueless boyfriends, this kind of environment is definitely night to a soccer mom's day. The band's most prominent prayer request is to not lose sight of their real goals. As they've been thrust into the intense heat of a summer tour with brutal and extra-bizarre conditions, they knew going in that they wouldn't be the same band when they're finished. If this mid-tour stop in San Antonio, Texas was any indication, they'll be closer and more committed to their vision than ever. Not a bad scenario when you add in all those thousands of new friends/fans into the equation, too.

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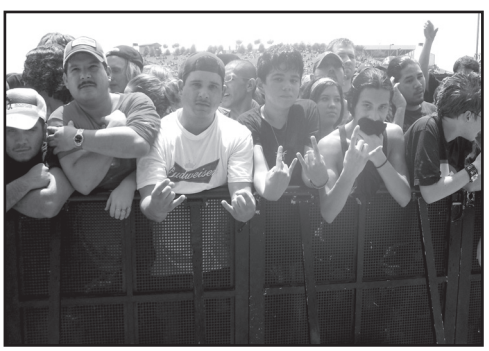
[For more Ozzfest anecdotes with The Showdown, check out the HM Magazine Podcast]



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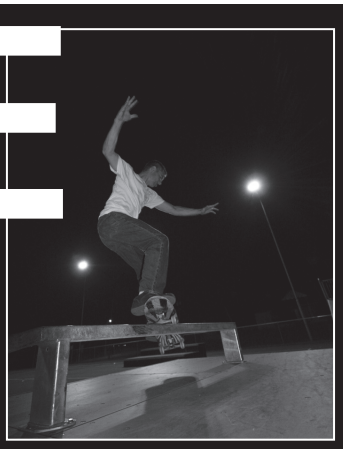

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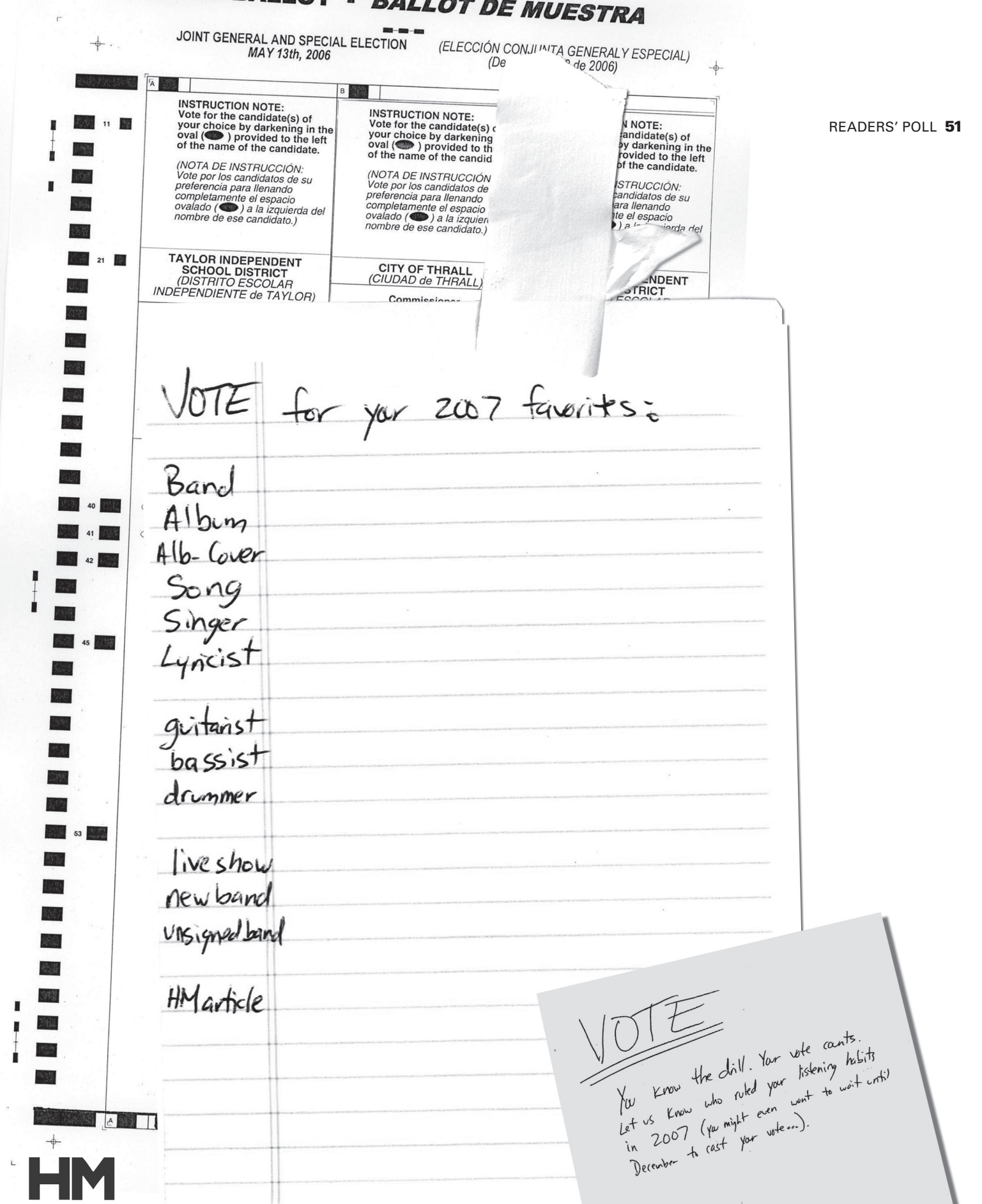
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Which (if any) musical instruments do you play? Guitar / Drums / Keyboards / Bass / Horns / Other

10. Are you in a band? YES NO
    If yes, what type of band? Independent / Unsigned / Worship / Church / Signed
    If yes, how many times do you play shows a month? 1 2-5 5-15 15+
11. Are you in college? YES NO
    If no, do you plan to attend? YES NO
12. Are you considering the armed forces? YES NO
13. Are you a youth pastor or involved with leadership in a youth group? YES NO
14. What percentage of music you buy is purchased from a "Christian" label? 0 10 25 50 75 100%
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Shopping information

17. Other than HM, where do you find out about new music? (*circle all that apply*) Spin / AP / CCM / Magnet / internet / Revolver / Relevant / Other:_____
18. Which of the following do you read? (*circle all that apply*) Bible study / Biographies / Christian living / Devotions / Fiction / Sci-fi / Sports / Other / ballistic charts
19. Where do you buy your CD's? Indie music store / Chain store / Internet / Christian bookstore / Other
20. How many songs did you download from the internet in the last month? 0 1-15 16-30 31-45 46+
    For the majority of those songs, you... Paid a fee / Paid nothing
21. Favorite online source for music info? _____
22. I miss the HM sampler CD's TRUE FALSE
23. Could "take" Pillar members in fight TRUE FALSE
    If true, schedule my match in: DAY NIGHT

24. ***How many... each month?***

	1-2	3-4	5-6	7+
CD's bought				
DVD's bought				
Concerts/shows attended				
Books read				
Video/computer games				
T-shirts bought				
Pants/jeans bought				
Items of body jewelry bought				
Skateboard/BMX accessories				
Movies attended or rented				
Hours online (*a week*)				

HM Reading habits

25. ***Rank HM sections*** 1=NEVER READ 4=ALWAYS READ

	1	2	3	4
Letters to the editor				
Hard news				
Main features				
Album reviews				
DVD reviews				
Book reviews				
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Columns				
Back page				

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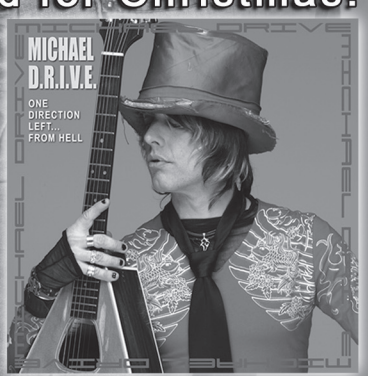

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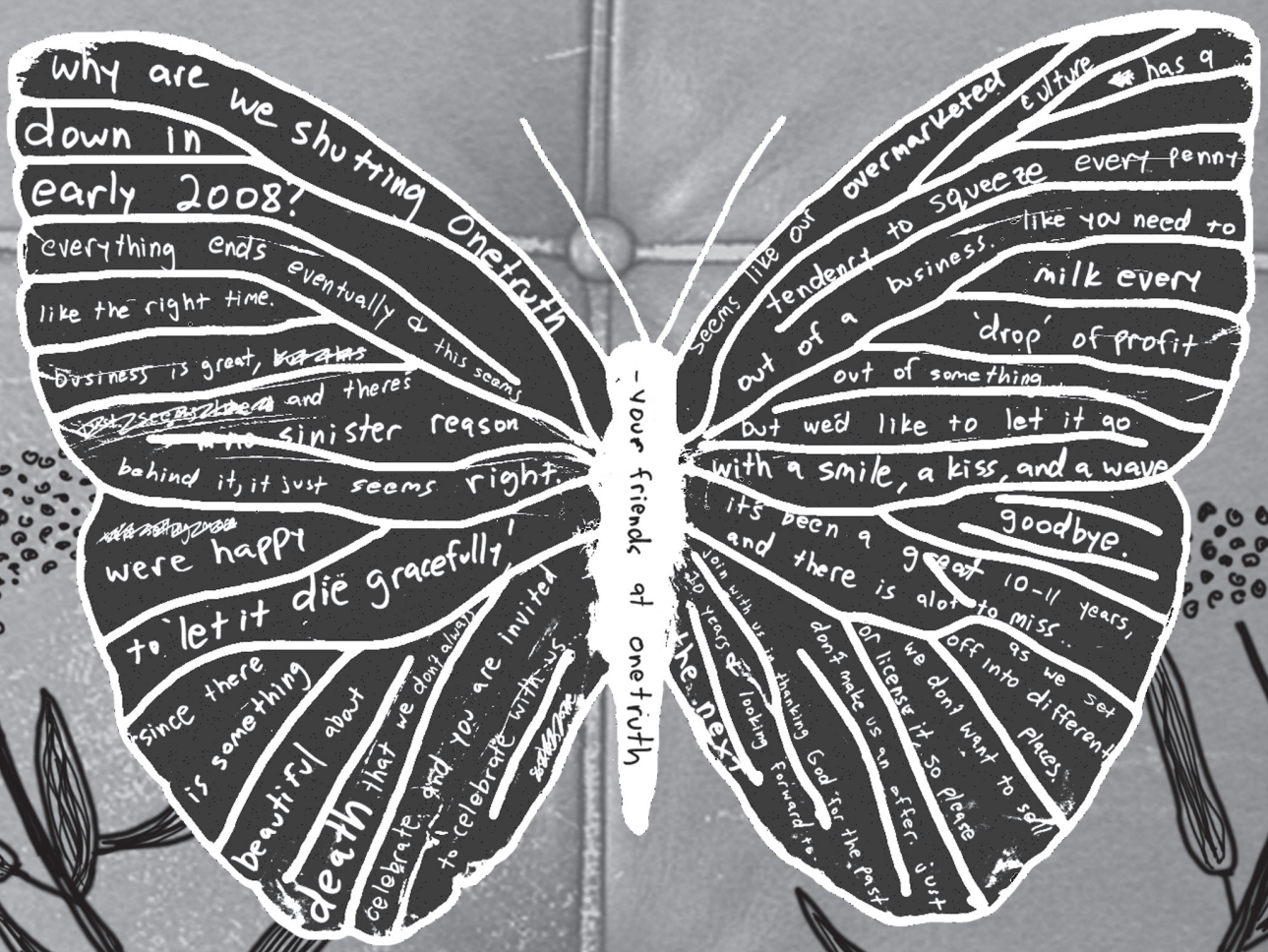
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it's been a great 10-11 years, and there is alot to miss..
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goodbye

What **Chris Cornell** Says

SITTING DOWN WITH CHRIS CORNELL TURNED OUT TO BE A VERY PLEASANT EXPERIENCE. JUDGING BY HOW HE USUALLY HANDLES HIMSELF IN THE MEDIA, I FIGURED IT WOULD PROBABLY BE A COMFORTABLE, LAID-BACK CONVERSATION. BUT, TO BE HONEST, IT WAS ALSO EASY TO FEEL THE WEIGHT OF THIS GUY'S MUSICAL PEDIGREE AS I WAITED IN THE HALLWAY OF THE FOUR SEASONS HOTEL JUST INSIDE FROM THE COURTYARD OUT BACK, WHERE A COUPLE OF VIDEO CAMERAS ROLLED FOR A LOCAL TV SHOW. LATER THAT NIGHT IT WAS A GAS TO HEAR THE GOLDEN-VOICED SINGER RECOUNT THE FIRST QUESTION THAT I BROUGHT UP. I LAUGHED WITH MY FRIEND (AND FELLOW SOUNDGARDEN FANATIC PAUL RORABACK) BETWEEN SONGS, "TELL US MORE ABOUT THE INTERVIEW!" PORTIONS OF THIS TALK WERE ALSO BROADCAST IN OUR PODCAST #9.

Photo: Max Vadukul

Austin, Texas. What are your thoughts on this fine city when you arrive, when you're departing and those random times when you're looking back, thinking about the city?

Well, I guess I look forward to it, because it's green. It's kind of nice. I don't remember ever having a bad time in Austin. It's kind of a music town. Lots of people I know or knew throughout the years playing music would end up spending some time here, either living here or moving here to live. I always felt kind of curious. It seems to me – given some of those people that I know that have moved here (laughs), it must be a city of relative tolerance, ya know, in Texas, which I think is really great. I've always had great shows here. I've also had great shows across Texas. I remember one specific thing that happened when Soundgarden first came here. We were probably on tour for the first Sub Pop Record, which is the first time that we came here – to Texas, period. I'm in a band who one guy where both of his parents are from Bombay and another guy who both his parents are from Tokyo and they were afraid of being outside of their own world and being in the South and being in Texas. Their parents were afraid that people wouldn't treat 'em well, because they're not white. That somehow we're gonna get in trouble or they're gonna get lynched. And we came into this convenience store in Austin and I walked in... Me and Hiro walked in and asked directions on how to get to the hotel we were going to. It was like a Motel 6 kind of thing. And this guy was unloading a beer truck into the convenience store and he was unloading, like, flats of 24/case of beer... We go in and ask directions and we had this really bad attitude about Texas and about being in the South and not being white and the whole thing... I kinda had a lot of that, because I didn't know what Texas was like. We get directions and go to walk out and we're getting in the van and the guy that was unloading the beer comes up to the van with a case and he knocks on the window and we open the door and he says, "This is from the Austin Welcoming Committee," and... It was obvious that it was the first time that we were there, and he gives us a 24/case of beer and walks off. I thought, 'Okay, this Texas hospitality thing is not a myth. That (bleep) doesn't happen in Chicago or Seattle! Nobody comes up to you and gives you a case a beer and tells you (that) you look like you're from somewhere else ... ever!' So, it made us feel so good and so welcomed and comfortable. You know, first time we're away from our home, ever, and travelling around the country by ourselves. We didn't have any money, didn't have anything. We didn't have cell phones then, so that was one of the coolest things to happen to us in my early years of touring ... and it happened here.

What was it like doing another solo album after working with such great bands and players over the years? How's it feel?

Um, great! I guess I can say I've been really lucky with the people I've played with, but also, um, I've always brought a lot to the table. Whether it's Soundgarden or Audioslave, Temple of the Dog, whatever I've done. I've brought a lot to those records and to those bands. I always knew I could do those things as a solo artist, I just didn't necessarily want to. Soundgarden was kind of a band where it was bigger than the sum of its parts and I knew that. I knew I could make records outside of Soundgarden, but it would be a different thing. I also knew there'd always be time to do that. I knew Soundgarden wasn't a band that was going to last forever. I didn't know how long it was going to last. But I guess I was doing Temple of the Dog and other side projects pretty early on in Soundgarden. I knew I could kind of do whatever I want when I want to do it. And being in that band – I was mostly focused on that. Even when I was in Audioslave, I was mostly focused on Audioslave. But I never felt like, as Chris Cornell, I'm going to have trouble finding great musicians. The band that I have now are unbelievable musicians. Some of the songs that we're playing that are old songs I've never really done them as well, I think. So, it's kind of a situation of, ya know, "if you're a person that puts everything you have into something and you need other people, or you want other people to do that with you, you're going to get great people, because you're that focused." I've always just

sort of looked at it that way. If there's something wrong with my band or my own record or anything, I'm just going to view it as my fault. I've always looked at it that way. It hasn't hurt me so far! (laughs)

Tell me a little bit about the players you're playing with now.
They're all, like... I don't think any of them are from LA, but they're all musicians that I met in LA – going through an audition process like anybody else would; except I suppose it's like... What people might think, I guess, is that if you do something like that, maybe you're looking for the best players. Some bands are probably like they don't even care about the best players. All they're looking for is people who look right. I'm not really sure. I was not really looking for either of those. I was looking for people that sort of got the spirit of the music. It's such an extended framework of twenty years of recording. Because, they had to be a musician that gets what Soundgarden did in 1990, but also gets what I'm doing in my newest record that's not even out yet. That's not that easy. And it has taken a lot longer than I thought, but it also ended up being kind of obvious. I didn't have a list of musicians where they were runners–up or people in second place. I would kind of find a guy and there's no one else on that list for that guy. I just ended up finding two guitar players and a bass player and a drummer that I totally got 100% behind. And also, it's really interesting, they would be playing a song from whatever period – you know, an old Soundgarden song or Temple of the Dog song or an Audioslave song and I'd go to the rehearsal – they'd be rehearsing it – and there'd be people outside the door listening. I wasn't in there, and they weren't from any of those bands that they were playing the music of – and it sounded incredible. It was obviously more than just a cover band or a band putting something together so they can make money. They really got it and really love playing the music. Again, I feel like I'm lucky that that's happening. I can't imagine any of the guys I'm working with sort of not being there and someone else being in their place. And then there's things about it that feel strange. Like, Audioslave was the same thing for me. It was three guys that live in California that I've never met before and me... and we forming a band. The only difference is I wrote songs with them and now I do it on my own. But the first time I went out with Audioslave it was like, 'I have to get to know these people and how they do things. It's not Soundgarden anymore.' This is like that, too. But it's all new guys and we're playing songs, we're getting amazing reactions on. I'm able to play songs consistently live from my catalog that I've never done before, because of their level of musicianship. They can go all across the boards and do songs that are technically pretty difficult and still destroy songs that are pretty simple rock songs. We've done, I don't know – ten shows together. Every one of them's been great, but it's still like a family and we're just kind of getting to know each other.

What was the last unpopular stance you've taken? How did you deal with the fallout? What was it?
I don't remember. I don't know that I've ever really gotten a huge backlash for anything I've ever done. I don't know. Being a musician and a famous recording artist, what stance would I take that would be unpopular? So, the people that like my music and go see my shows? One would be like if I were absolutely 100% unqualified fan of the Bush Administration. That'd be very unpopular and I'd get fallout from it right away, but I'd also get, like, a lot of supporters, I'm sure. I don't know. To a certain degree, most of my attitudes are pretty well accepted by the people that would have anything to say about me. I've never been the type of commercial superstar where if you say something the opposition will be so threatened by it and take such offense by it that they respond dramatically to it. I've never had that big of an influence, I don't think, on the commercial populace to be considered any threat by anything I've said. So, I don't know. I'm relatively unscathed. (laughs) Can you think of one?

Something that you've done? No.
I can't either.

I thought maybe you'd pull something out, like, "I told my wife we were gonna vacation in Miami..." I had no idea what you would answer with.
No, I was thinking more in terms of like saying something in the press that got a bad reaction to it.

Right, like the Dixie Chicks or something...
Yeah, where it becomes sort of feud–like or where someone gets in a fight with Howard Stern over something – that kind of public feud thing. I've had friends in bands that that's happened to. That (bleep) will follow you forever, too. But it hasn't happend to me.

What do you think is the significance of hope and encouragement – specifically for the artist, but also for the general person?
Well, I think you have to have some of it, or you're probably not going to be able to get through life. There has to be some amount of hope and encouragement and some spark of something that gets you out of bed in the morning, gets you toward the next day, gets you to work and through your work day and back home. I think that where that comes from isn't so simple, necessarily. For example, when I was younger, if I was listening to music that could be perceived as dark or depressed in terms of its topics, it didn't make me depressed. If anything, it made me feel better – hopeful, like when you read a book and you read an author that might've been dead for 200 years saying something that you thought you were the only one that thought of. You realize you're not alone. That kind of thing. So, when I would do interviews sometimes and people would accuse me of writing depressing, dark lyrics and 'What do you have to be depressed about?' That kind of thing. It never made a lot of sense to me. And I don't think it has that kind of effect on a listening audience. I think there being a connection is an encouragement. There won't be connections if it's not natural or normal. If the song doesn't come from the right place, there won't be one. But, in other words, you can help create that encouragement and that hope in a lot of different ways – not just by, like, writing "We Are The World." In fact, I think that's really a depressing song! (laughs) Nothing makes me more depressed than fake hopefulness, I've got to say. Sometimes when I'm going through the channels and I'll see the evangelical Christian shows, where they've got singers and they're singing songs ... and I just don't get any inspiration out of that at all. Something's missing. I feel like they're not really feeling it – that they're just up there singing it. The tv cameras are on. There's more makeup than anyone I've ever seen, and there's something just totally fake about it, and the music's not inspiring me at all. So, you know, the whole idea is the message of hope and encouragement there. I don't get any of it. I'm sure there are tons of Marilyn Manson fans that were brought up in a particular way and raised around particular people where maybe they didn't feel necessarily connected to anybody and they listen to a Marilyn Manson record and realize that there's some family of Manson fans out there that also feel disenfranchised and then they're part of something and it's great. That's not a bad thing at all. But, obviously, I wouldn't be singing today if I didn't manage to continue to find hope myself or encouragement or hope and encouragement in and about humanity, period. Other people. I've gone through different periods of my life where I didn't have a whole lot of good things to say about the human race in general. It depends on what I would want to concentrate on. I don't really feel like that anymore. I think it depends on where the focus is and how much I'm exposed to and effected by media events. You know, like the Virginia Tech shooting. It's like one guy that went berserk and killed 32 people. If I sit around and think about that, it doesn't make me have a lower opinion of humanity. Even if you just look at the map and it's one guy who killed 32 people who were defenseless. It makes me concerned about just the structure of society now, because for some reason we seem to be producing people that do this kind of thing more often and on a larger level. But there are billions of people in the world that aren't doing awful things – that do amazing things. I just have to keep my mind focused. I think anybody that's ready to go do some crazy (bleep) thing should remind themselves of that, too. You know? It's not just a world full of awful, horrible, selfish, sinning, evil people. Most people, I think, are good. I've been in arguments with friends about this subject for hours, but I don't think humans are inherently evil. I actually think that humans are great ... and they're just easily corruptible, unfortunately.

The music you've made over the years has seemingly captured some of the magic that roots rock and roll was a part of. In a way, it's like you've touched the spirit and captured the flesh. Have you ever done the opposite – and reached out towards the flesh and captured the essence of the spirit?
I think I've probably done both of those things in equal measure, kind of. I think that's sort of where my focus is now. I don't really want to make an attempt at anything when I'm writing a song now. And I don't want to be concerned with the outcome so much as just the process of doing it. I've spent years where the actual process of sitting alone and writing songs was kind of terrifying, arduous... It was lonely. And then it had its moments of feeling great and triumphs and it's been very fulfilling as well. A lot of it wasn't. Part of that was being so concerned about what the end result is while I'm doing it. And before I'm not even near an end result. Nowadays I'm not really reaching for anything ... other than enjoying writing music that day. And letting the inspiration take me wherever it is. I try to focus on wherever the first thought and the first inspiration is. Because I feel like that's the most honest one. Maybe it might not technically be the best one, but it will be the one people connect with the most. And then the outcome inevitably does seem to be something that does capture the essence of something somehow. I think it's easier to do it without letting my fingers, which are clumsy, or my brain get too involved in it. It's kind of New Age–y, and I always think of that as being really silly, but it's sort of a way that I've approached moving forward songwriting–wise, because I feel like there's something in there big–time that I'll sort of just stumble across at some point. I think that's a good thing.

I'm glad you're doing that.
I was going to say something else, but I don't remember

now. (laughs)

You mentioned you were doing both in equal parts...
Yeah. Well, that in my career has been what has happened. And I think that's kind of unpredictable. Even if it's all intellectual. Like the song, "Big Dumb Sex" was completely intellectual. It was, like, making fun of Madonna and George Michael and really just the pop music media, where they'll play song after song after song with sexual innuendos and every word that can be used to describe (bleep) except the actual word (bleep). But if you use the actual word (bleep), everybody gets completely freaked out. So, it was just completely whimsical to write that song, "Big Dumb Sex" and have the word (bleep) 35 times in it. And the words are just completely benign, just stupid sex lyrics, but with that word in it. So many people reacted to it in ways that were not great. People, just like... one of them was ... There were people at A&M Records at the time that didn't want to work there if A&M Records was going to put out music like that and release it to the general public. And this was at a time when NWA was releasing records and they were actually saying things. They weren't just making fun of pop music and people's avoidance of the word (bleep). They were actually saying hardcore (bleep). One of the other responses that was so weird was... And this is the one I liked the least – was we would start playing it live in shows and I'd start seeing sort of meatheaded guys, usually kind of bigger guys that are singing lyrics and pumping fists in the air and it's become their new sort of meathead anthem. Because they think we went ahead and wrote a song about that because that's how they feel about things. (laughs) And it became this kind of beer, drunken, kegger anthem. That wasn't really the point, either. So we stopped playing it. But it was funny, because I actually did have an intellectual idea in mind for the song, but no one ever really picked that part out. They looked at it as being offensive and sexist, although it's not gender–specific at all. Or they looked at it as being the rock anthem that someone finally got around to writing. (laughs) Pretty amazing!

What do you think about Jesus Christ?
Um, I think he was like a really a great guy. He was probably really smart, really caring, absurdly committed to his beliefs. Smarter than... When I say "smart," intellectually pretty damn smart and manipulative. Someone that could've done anything – been anything. I believe in the basic stories about his life, because they're corroborated by people from different walks of life at the time. Some of them had more education. Some had no education. They're all telling the same story. It's never really happened before about religious figures. I think that Christianity as a religion has very little of what his message was – and most of the offshoots of it. Certainly like the bigger ones. And there's a paper trail for that. You can go in the library and read all about all of the different Christian churches and their sub-sects and what time they came to be and why and how much of it was politicking and how much of the... What the Bible's made up of and what books and scriptures were put into it and why and what time and who voted on it. All that stuff is available to read. I think his original message was completely corrupted – completely. And almost sort of turned upside–down. And it's been used for purposes to get troops together and military over the centuries and to steal from other people and wipe out entire cultures. But I don't... I would never suggest that one guy is responsible for any of that. It's another example of the corruptibility of human nature and how (bleep) far it can go without people kind of realizing that it's been that corrupted. It's incredible to me. Or sort of taking the idea of faith and religion is great, but following a particular rule book without actually going and researching where it came from and realizing then that it's corrupted and it's edited by people that probably weren't good people and beliefs that have nothing to do with religion... I think to follow that blindly is sort of dumb. We all, as human beings, have a responsibility to get to the bottom of stuff. I mean, God gave us brains, not so we could just blindly follow. That doesn't make any sense.

What do you think about His claims to be "the Way, the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father but by Me?"
Well, it's all interpretive. So, I don't know. If someone were to take it literally, you would then have to go, "What does it mean literally?" And "What does 'by Me' mean?" And then going through Him or by Him is what exactly? (laughs) There are a lot of interpretations. My own interpretation would be, like: "I know in my own heart it has nothing to do with what anybody else has to say or another person has written about or a large group or small group of people claim. It doesn't matter."

Cobain, Vetter, Staley. Which personality do you think you're closest to?
I don't know. I have some things in common with all of them. Eddie's someone I've known a lot better than the other two. I have many similar qualities and many that are really... He has, actually, a lot of really great qualities that I don't have. A lot of really inspiring qualities that I don't have, that are just naturally him. And there's certain aspects of me that I don't see in any of them. I think there's... We have sort of a geographic link and then we have a link where we were all musicians and songwriters to some degree. There are certain things that musicians and songwriters kind of have in common. They're all creative. Those are all just normal. You could compare me to someone on some boardwalk or street right now playing a guitar for dollar bills. And you could find similarities as you would with me and any other person that is a famous musician or whatever. It's not even much of a geographic link, because Eddie wasn't really born in the Northwest. Layne was. Maybe if Layne and Kurt were still alive we'd be exactly alike! (laughs) I don't know. I think about... Andy Wood was someone who, to me, was in someways more brilliant than all of us. Jeff Buckley was more brilliant. Just more naturally talented and more, like, crazy brilliant than all of us. I think Jeff and Andy had something more in common. Shannon Hoon kind of had this quality, too. Of a child–like kind of openness towards life – like a complete openness toward life – that didn't seem to ever go away. All three of those guys had that. I never saw that in Layne or Kurt. There was guardedness going on there. There was vulnerability, but also a lot of (bleep) "Stay back!" (crosses arms over chest) sort of armor happening. That was never something I noticed in Jeff at all ... or Andy. Andy seemed to be completely raw and kind of defenseless and throw himself out there – for better or worse.

So, let's say a series of terrorist attacks takes out electricity pretty much across the entire West. What would you see your role as a musician/artist doing?
I don't know. I would first be happy that I could get up and entertain the militia with an acoustic guitar, because you could still do that without electricity. It's funny, because I've done, like, these web events when I'm playing acoustic guitar and singing – and that's it. It's available for people to go online and check out and I see the technology that they take to film it, to upload it, and how far–reaching those events go all over the world, but all it basically is designed to film and capture and then to present: a guy sitting on a stool with an aoustic guitar singing. There's nothing modern about what it is people wanted to see in him. It makes you feel happy in a sense. It makes me feel very encouraged and feel great about the fact that, first of all, I've had means.

"Nothing makes me more depressed than fake hopefulness..."

I can count on what I've done and chosen to do for my whole life will always be somewhat relevant – even in an immediate sense. Another role I suppose would be... And this might not be because I'm a musician, but just because I seem to have an – thus far as it's been tested – an ability to stay pretty calm and focused in times of craziness. I haven't really been in too many situations where it's like chaos from the outside and I had to take a leadership role; but when I have been in those situations, I'm completely focused. So, it depends on what it would be. I thank God I'm not in that situation right now. It freaks me out when I see other people being thrown into that situation – in this country especially – where we feel somehow impregnable sometimes and like we have endless resources and then something like Katrina happens and everyone sort of watches in shock and feels helpless. Even people that went down could easily become part of the problem. It's really a horrible thing. So, I thank God that I'm not in that situation.

Addiction recovery seems like a humbling process. How do you think it's shaped your perspective on your fellow man?
I think there's a connection effect that it has – me and everybody else. I came through a period of addiction where it was an isolation. I wasn't, like, out among people or among friends or hanging out with people – where I was really being noticed a lot. So, there's a lot of isolation going on, and then in the process of stopping that behavior and changing my life, which basically means changing everything in my life... It was: A) very humbling; and B) I was surrounded by other people that have the same problem – from all walks of life. I was sort of forced, as everybody is in that situation – to come to the conclusion that I'm not special. I'm not having this problem because I've got special needs and special emotional issues and no one understands me. Because when you get in a room and people talk about it, you realize everybody has the same issue and is doing it for the same reason and the same things and whether it's

continued on page 67

RETROACTIVE RECORDS

TITANIC – FULL STEAM AHEAD
Two bonus tracks feature STRYPER's Robert Sweet on drums! For fans of Judas Priest and Iron Maiden. angelicwarlord.com says, "This one proves quite the powerful piece – both musically and lyrically – with an avalanche of mega-tight riffs sustaining it from front to back."

DELIVERANCE – GREETINGS OF DEATH, ETC.
DELIVERANCE – THE FIRST FOUR YEARS
Both are Limited Edition reissues of early thrash demos from one of Christian metal's most prolific metal bands. Remastered, enhanced and new artwork!!!

DELIVERANCE – ASSIMILATION (Special Edition)
This remastered reissue contains a bonus CD of the 14 previously unreleased demos from the Assimilation recordings, making this a 2 CD set! This is brilliant, progressive metal made readily available once again!

DELIVERANCE – AS ABOVE~SO BELOW
Few groups have ever blended epic thrash / speed metal with the elegance and beauty of progressive metal (later period Deliverance) with such devastating skill and brutality. Alternating so many moments of beauty with beastly moments of metallic fury and spine snapping riffs that would seem right at home on a Slayer, Believer, or early Deliverance album.

SARDONYX – MAJESTIC SERENITY / REBEL OF REASON
Remastered and reissued heavy, this previously rare & crunchy thrash metal release now includes the band's original demo!
For fans of Testament & early Megadeth!

ULTIMATUM – INTO THE PIT
All new release from New Mexico thrash masters.

ULTIMATUM – SYMPHONIC EXTREMITIES
Remastered classic with bonus tracks!

ULTIMATUM – THE MECHANICS OF PERILOUS TIMES
Remastered classic with bonus tracks!

SEVENTH SEAL – MESSENGERS OF LOVE
Remastered reissue of ultra rare 1990 classic metal from Norway! Powerful **vocals** and high octane dual guitars bring to mind TNT & Yngwie Malmsteen!

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Album reviews

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EMERY

I'M ONLY A MAN

Growing up is sometimes hard to do, and it can be especially difficult for a young band. The members have to contend with their individual lives; i.e. the ups and downs of exiting adolescence, entering into adulthood, and coming to grips with some modicum of celebrity. They also have to manage the development of the group – furthering and deepening the band's sound, keeping old fans through the shifting of their sound, cultivating a wider fan base, keeping the band together if members choose to leave, and contending with personality differences. All this and the band still must tour regularly while writing new material for the upcoming album that will hopefully help them turn the tide. And, sadly, music history is littered with bands and artists of all sizes, shapes, and descriptions that never "made it" – the stress literally crushes them.

Thus, after two increasingly successful albums (*The Weak's End* sold 100,000+, while *The Question* sold 200,000+), Emery stands up boldly on their newest release, *I'm Only A Man*, to declare that they aren't afraid to grow and grow well. Nodding at their post-hardcore and screamo roots, this new record finds the 5 men of Emery confidently crafting the music they know they should be making. Not content to rest on their laurels, the band pushes the boundaries of their soundcraft and lyricism through the increased use of keyboards, the cessation of a majority of the screaming-type vocals, a new-found appreciation of dynamics within a song, and biting, penetrating phrases like, "People want the truth, but never want the scars." With tracks like "Rock-N-Rule," "After The Devil Beats His Wife," and "Story About A Man With A Bad Heart," *I'm Only A Man* proves to be a record made by men and not boys. [TOOTH & NAIL] ADAM P. NEWTON

Rating system

05 *CLASSIC*
04 *FABULOUS*
03 *SOLID*
02 *SUSPECT*
01 *AMISS*
***** *1/2*

IMMORTAL SOULS
WINTEREICH

Finnish deathsters Immortal Souls may call what they do winter metal; though that's apropos for this conceptual collection centering on frosty desolation as metaphor for alienation from the world, there's room for some qualifying of their approach. This third full-length IS salvo hurls darkly melodic riffage with power metal undercurrents from guitarist E. Sarkioja. A. Sarkioja hisses and growls vocals like with an articulation and place in the mix that almost negates the need for the thankfully present lyrics sheet. Such is a bit more the case on the properly sung harmonies. A booklet laid out like a glossy prose chapbook supplemented by photos of their homeland's snowy foliage completes a regal package worthy of a place in the collections of headbangers desirous of a ministerial approach to their metalurgy as well as those for whom art for its own Christ edifying sake. ~~[FACEDOWN] JAMIE LEE RAKE~~

FALLING UP
CAPTIVA

As sonic waves crash onto the shores of ambient rock, power pop, emo and modern/hard rock, it's clear the guys in Falling Up aren't content with the previous parameters for success set on their first two studio releases. Instead, *Captiva* showcases a band more than able to move on past the loss of guitarist Joseph Kisselburgh (who went on to form his own act, The Send) and raise the bar even higher. *Captiva* is easily the best effort thus far in the young career of Falling Up. Frontman and principal songwriter Jessy Ribordy wrestles and willingly loses quite beautifully to the plans and grace of God within impressive song structures that hold up quite well amidst the struggle. "A Guide to Marine Life" renders previous Falling Up efforts obsolete in the memory of the listener once the piano-driven, electro-rock track bursts wide open. That trend only continues on standout tracks like "Helicopter," the synth-rock of "Drago or the Dragons" and the layered textures of "The Dark Side of Indoor Track Meets." The latter has a movie soundtrack feel that's quite impressive. The end result? Falling Up's best record yet. ~~[BEC] MATT CONNER~~

OH SLEEPER!
WHEN I AM GOD

When I Am God is the debut album for Oh Sleeper! who recently signed to Solid State Records. The band came from all different corners of the country, and somehow cam together to form an amazing rock band. The new album is set to release on November 7th and is sure to please crowds of all sorts. The band keeps to a traditional rock style by adding amazing guitar riffs and solid drum beats to the album, but also adds in some of what seems to be computerized effects. Such as in "The Siren Song" in which you hear echoing effects, only adding to the impact of the song. With amazing musical orchestration, as well as dynamic lyrics, Oh Sleeper! is album to provide an amazing mixture in order to achieve perfection in song. I really enjoyed this album. Mostly just the way the music and lyrics matched so well. I recommend this album to anyone who wants to hear great music. This album really shows us that Oh Sleeper! has broken through and has become alive!. ~~[SOLID STATE] TIMOTHY GERST~~

BESIEGED
ATLANTIS

For their debut full-length *Atlantis*, Besieged makes a potent presence by presenting twelve thunderous tracks that never relent their intensity or voracity. Appearing as pupils of As I Lay Dying minus the melodic relief, the song's pure metal riffs race in-between sparse pauses of breakdowns or choruses. Vocalist Mattie Montgomery does not once sell out his growls for softer tones even when the songs end up taking a break –but only for a few long deep breaths, then they're off again. ~~[BLOOD & INK] DAN FRAZIER~~

CRY OF THE AFFLICTED
THE UNVEILING

The best thing to do with *The Unveiling* is to not judge it by its first song. Cry of the Afflicted's opening track "Lift the Veil" is typical screamo, but the rest of the record tends to shy away from such a genre into a more melodic, guitar-driven distorted rock. This five-piece from Canada have pulled together a pretty dense record. Delay is all over the guitars on the record, and lot of the riffs seem to be picked from the same tree. The vocals sound like they have 14 people singing at any given point, and it sounds like that throughout the record. The songwriting is decent, even if the subject matter is overdone ("Bury my remains / under ashes falling on my grave…" etc.). The band does have flashes of brilliance. There are definitely a couple parts that made me take a step back and rewind the track to make sure I heard correctly; unfortunately, what's between the great parts on *The Unveiling* and the good parts is too distant.
~~[SOLID STATE] DAVID STAGG~~

INKED IN BLOOD
SOMETIMES WE ARE BEAUTIFUL

If hardcore is yearning to become more catchy, Inked In Blood is helping accelerate the evolution. While still maintaining the rapid and hefty elements that make up the genre's staple structure, the Portland quintet is underscored by their unapologetic melodic texture. Vocalist Joey Trump fulfills the difficult task of maintaining the songs' heavy tone by growling the lyrics over the uplifting verses and, err, choruses. And while he makes a strong stand, guitarist Kelly Mullinix too often counters him with a soaring soprano and wins the biased case. ~~[FACEDOWN] DAN FRAZIER~~

IMPENDING DOOM
NAILED. DEAD. RISEN.

"Father God, I am just a sinner God, but I am nothing without You," that's the first line in the opening track on the new Impending Doom album *Nailed. Dead. Risen.* The album follows an amazing theme – that of the death of our Lord, his Resurrection, the necessary relationship with Him, and then Eternal Life with him. Some titles off the album are songs such as "In Reverence Of", "Condemned", "For All Have Sinned", and "He's Coming Back." These keep great with the theme of the album. To me, that is the best part of the album. I also enjoyed the music, but not the lyrics. The lyrics were not understandable. I know it is called Heavy Metal, but I would like to hear what the song is saying without reading the lyrics. In spite of this, the music is fantastic. It has great sound and fits in well with their genre.Overall, I would say this – great album, good theme, wonderful music, but needs improvement. ~~[FACEDOWN] TIMOTHY GERST~~

Ratings

	DV	Writer
Emery *An Ocean Between Us*	04	03*
Immortal Souls *Wintereich*	04	04
Falling Up *Captiva*	03	04*
Oh Sleeper! *When I Am God*	03	04
Besieged *Atlantis*	04	03*
Cry Of The Afflicted *The Unveiling*	03*	03
Inked In Blood *Sometimes We Are Beautiful*	04	03*
Impending Doom *Nailed. Dead. Risen.*	04	04
Dance Gavin Dance *Downtown Battle Mountain*	04	04
Catherine *The Naturals*	03*	03
At the Throne of Judgment *The Arcanum Order*	03	03*
Fairweather Fan *The Ghost Of Honesty*	02*	03
Common Yet Forbidden *The Struggle*	03	03
Jars Of Clay *Christmas Songs*	03	04
Jars Of Clay *Live Monsters*	03*	04
David Crowder Band *Remedy*	03*	04*

DANCE GAVIN DANCE

DOWNTOWN BATTLE MOUNTAIN

Dance Gavin Dance handle themselves quite well in the midst of an overcrowded genre. After all, if it's normally the loudest voice that receives the most attention, imagine how loud you must be to standout in the world of hardcore and screamo. So it seems DGD simply decided to take the memorable route while still retaining the elements of their musical label. *Downtown Battle Mountain* contains a few gems, the highlight of which is "It's Safe to Say You Dig the Backseat." The track features vocalist Jonny Craig's best work surrounded by stunning guitar work that knows exactly how to turn it up and let it go, while other bands only can handle one of the two. The song closes with a automatic fire percussion that closes things perfectly. Producer Kris Crummett deftly handles the various melodic and hardcore elements, but then again his work on Fear Before the March of Flames would have you expecting that. Guitars remain heavy without drowning the rest and Jon Mess's screams stir and incite in all the right ways. All said, *Downtown Battle Mountain* stands just fine on its own. ~~[RISE] MATT CONNER~~

CATHERINE

THE NATURALS

Catherine is a band that plays hardcore music. I am a writer who listens to hardcore music and reviews it. Sometimes the combination of these two things can be fairly disgruntling and tough on a reviewer. Like when Catherine, a five-piece outfit hailing from Sacramento, crafts a fairly typical hardcore record that for the most part blends into the sound of other hardcore bands. Disgruntling? It still remains technically sound, and has songwriting prowess. The problem is that *The Naturals* is not a bad record by any means; it's just been put out before – by other hardcore artists. It's got your breakdowns. It's got your quick, off-timed interludes and segues. It's got your peppered singing among the screaming. It's definitely a formula that's been heard. And when you pick up this record, it's going to sound familiar. That being said, the titular track "The Naturals," one of the better on the record, helps to set the band apart. It's got a pretty sweet breakdown that runs right up to the back of another. It's the quality of song parts like this that separate a band from every other band in their genre. They do it again on "Tailor." The band plays a pretty choppy riff over screams before breaking the same riff down into a rhythm that has you swaying. Catherine manages to do things like this throughout the CD, but the record needs to push the envelope a little more before I want to keep it on repeat. ~~[RISE] DAVID STAGG~~

AT THE THRONE OF JUDGMENT

THE ARCANUM ORDER

The Midwestern based metal act At The Throne Of Judgment launches their debut album with the velocity of a bullet shooting out of a gun. With a title that allures images of secret societies and complex conspiracies, *The Arcanum Order* takes inspiration from mythology ("Horus Rises") and legends ("Tomb Of The Thracians"). And as vocalist Eric Kemp shrieks and growls, his four bandmates brew a storm of expeditive shredding that spearheads into accumulative apexes of melody. Lyrical and musical message: every journey comes with a struggle, but for those who remain strong, comes victory. ~~[RISE] DAN FRAZIER~~

FAIRWEATHER FAN

THE GHOST OF HONESTY

For their full-length debut, *The Ghost Of Honesty*, Fairweather Fan neglected the current genre trends and created ten tracks from the early 00's. Before screaming and unisex hairstyles predominated, emo rock blasted out addictive riffs with scarce choruses all while being fronted by a twentysomething who unabashedly sang slightly off key. Does anyone remember Jimmy Eat World before *Bleed American* and Saves The Day before *Stay What You Are*? It's good to know that at least four guys from Hurricane, West Virginia do. ~~[WOUNDED] DAN FRAZIER~~

COMMON YET FORBIDDEN

THE STRUGGLE

I believe that metal can become very stagnant. No matter how technically good a band is, no matter how fast they guitarists can pick strings or a drummer can kick a bass drum, the music can still be lead one to be unaffected. I feel that this is the case for Common Yet Forbidden's release, The Struggle. The band is incredibly talented and has obviously taken the time to craft above average metal songs. (If you're looking for something more metal-core, don't bother here. They play fast, and they don't let up, not even for breakdowns.) This wouldn't be a problem, except that the riffs they're writing are the same type of riffs most metal bands write. My point: I listened to the entire CD, and the first time I stopped to go back and listen to a track was on number eight, "Dead Alive." I was impressed with their musical ability for the whole record, but didn't stop to take notice of a song until three-quarters of the way through the record. ~~[BOMBWORKS RECORDS] DAVID STAGG~~

JARS OF CLAY

CHRISTMAS SONGS

Most pop stars record holiday albums, yet too many of these assembly line releases come off like group plagiarism – same songs, different singers. But for those in search of Christmas music that doesn't sound like mass produced, cookie cutter stale baked goods for Old Saint Nick, Jars Of Clay has given us an original 'n tasty treat. Granted, many of these song titles are familiar (there are only so many holiday favorites to go around, after all). But just dig their take on "O Little Town of Bethlehem," which is done down tempo with an alternate melody. Their "Drummer Boy" changes a familiar TV show dirge into a jazzy little number built upon skittering drums. Elsewhere, "Love Came Down At Christmas" borrows the rhythm of Tom Petty's "I Won't Back Down," and then adds a jazzy guitar solo, while "Christmastime Is Here" gives that Charlie Brown TV favorite a little extra twang-y oomph. If you crave familiarity, however, "God Rest Ye, Merry Gentlemen" is given a relatively straight forward run-through. *Christmas Songs* is a holiday CD you'll actually listen to; it's not just gift-opening background music. ~~[GRAY MATTERS] DAN MACINTOSH~~

JARS OF CLAY

LIVE MONSTERS

"More than any album that we have done as a band, *Good Monsters* was meant to be played live," Jars' guitarist Matt Odmark says while explaining their latest release, *Live Monsters*. The two dozen microphones encompassing the set allowed vocalist Dan Haseltine to soar and the band to make good on *Monsters*' live potential. "Work" doesn't stray from the straightforward path originally tread, while "Light Gives Heat" is nicely reworked. Turns out Odmark knew what he was talking about. ~~[ESSENTIAL] MATT CONNER~~

DAVID CROWDER BAND

REMEDY

Tears are in my eyes. The music may not seem all that remarkable, but my monitor is blurring just the same. "The Glory of It All" concludes with David singing, "We will never be the same," and I believe him. "Can You Feel It?" insists a scarce-seeming God is really there, and it's not just the electronic bells and whistles swirling into a rocker that makes me feel it. There's something more. When Andrew Beaujon raved about David Crowder Band in his outsider's view of Christian rock, *Body Piercing Saved My Life*, Crowder & Co. was granted instant street cred by some heretofore too-cool-for modern-worship types. That rep is neither helped nor hindered by the appearance of one Ted Nugent on "We Won't Be Quiet" (the same Motor City Madman whose latest cd cover would make the Spinal Tap boys blush, who was skewered for recommending Senators Clinton and Obama do rather graphic things with Ted's machine guns). *Remedy* is not *A* (73 minute, 21 Song, intricate in wordplay and packaging) *Collision*. The 10 songs are often more accessible (read: CCM). The lyrics are simpler … yet deeper. The memorable melodies – in a good way – are framed by sometimes sparse acoustics, sometimes dense electronics, all in the same track, with impeccable feel … and feeling! "O, For a Thousand Tongues to Sing" begins with a tantalizing harpsichord sound, morphing into Big Country Scottish guitars, but David seems to haphazardly toss out the timeless verses. He seems to, until the music broadens and creates a space for the word announcing the reason we sing to resonate: "Jesus." There is a wonder to the music of *Remedy*. A child-like wonder sometimes heard in the best of Stonehill, the Beatles, Brian Wilson, and Terry Taylor, one that may leave the listener, indie or mainstream, like Lewis "surprised by Joy." After all, "The whole world's about to change." ~~[SIX STEP] CAREY WOMACK~~

REMOVE THE VEIL

ANOTHER WAY HOME

Southern metal seems to be the next wave is heavy music. Never has it been cooler to list both Lynyrd Skynyrd and Hatebreed as influences. Actually, Remove The Veil's lists "everyone from Merle Haggard to Metallica," but you get the idea. From Maylene's sudden rise to heavyweight status, to the twangy riffs by He Is Legend and The Showdown, dixiecore is in. Enter, the newest face on Facedown's constantly growing lineup. The first 8 tracks on this debut rock hard and fast, like Metallica being holed up in a saloon and forced to keep time with a punk-rock drummer. The vocals rarely venture from tight-throated screams. Then all the sudden the final 3 tracks play more like a Southern spin on mainstream rockers from the late 90's. Plenty of energy served in platefuls like so much grits and cornbread, but it all starts to get repetitive after awhile, as the same riffs are pounded out for measures on end. Not bad, but plenty of room to grow in them britches. ~~[FACEDOWN] TIM HALLILA~~

FAR-LESS

A TOAST TO BAD TASTE

Far-Less is good. Far-Less is really good. This Virginia sextet is smart, creative, intuitive, catchy, and most importantly, growing. On their 2006 release, *Everyone Is Out To Get Us*, they took the first steps, leaving behind the post-hardcore sound and reaching out for something new and original. Now a year later, Far-Less strides past their prior accomplishments and establish themselves as a legitimate force with *A Toast To Bad Taste*. With sharp guitar work, drum work that will keep you tapping your feet, Brandon Welch's unique vocals and the addition of Elizabeth Pina on the keyboards, Far-Less has gone above and beyond any expectations and creates an album that will keep growing on you with each listen. ~~[TOOTH & NAIL] NATHAN DOYLE~~

FAUXLIAGE

S/T

Representing one of the best collaborations thus far in 2007, *Fauxliage* is a project that emerged from the ongoing musical relationship between Bill Leeb and Rhys Fulber, otherwise known as the dark electronica act Delirium, and Leigh Nash, familiar vocalist of Sixpence None The Richer turned solo artist. For both acts, Fauxliage represents a much needed change of environment, textures and, therefore, output. The beauty is immediate on album opener "All The World," with Nash slightly revealing her lyrical fangs and the ensuing electropop swirl sweeps the listener in with the venomous current. It's a song both memorable and haunting and it might just be the best track Nash has ever penned. "Rafe" follows a more acoustic path and seems more suitable to the lead single status it holds. The members of Fauxliage have noted in interviews that this was a stretch for both parties, yet it's clear this is a marriage made in heaven. All the hard work paid off in stride. ~~[NETTWERK] MATT CONNER~~

SONSET DOWN

YOU LOSE

Continuing in the same vein as the now defunct Georgia bands Fight Paris and Dead Reckless, the Southern boys in Sonset Down get wild with dirty rock interrupted by metalcore breakdowns. Blame it on high humidity, plaid shirts, or an addiction to sweet tea, but the collaboration creates a new edge to the often-stagnant metal genre and proves to be nastily infectious. And if you've ever found roaring vocals difficult to decipher, what until you hear one with an accent. ~~[WOUNDED] DAN FRAZIER~~

EVOKA

CRIES FROM THE CASTLEGATE

A few times each year, the rock scene gives birth to a debut disc that blindsides those who are listening. Bands like Deas Vail and Needtobreathe are some that come to mind from the last couple years. Enter Evoka, a North Carolina-based quartet that seems more influenced by the music across the pond and boasts one of the better debuts of the year, as well as an incredible vocalist, Taylor Redding. Evoka weaves both epic and melodic threads through the sonic tapestry of *Castlegate*, lending decent-yet-standard backdrops for Redding to stand upon. "On Your Face" finds Redding reaching his vocal pinnacle, easily moving aside the guitars for his time in the ring. It's a laid back number which suits Redding best and allows Evoka to, well, evoke a bit. "Dauphine" finds the vocalist reaching for an impressive falsetto and "1000x's" utilizes his harmonies well for the lighthearted album closer. If anything, *Castlegate* solidifies two primary things: Taylor Redding is set to eventually become a stellar frontman and Evoka has turned in a very solid debut. ~~[DJ BOY] MATT CONNER~~

GORILLA WARFARE

THE BATTLEFIELDS

Abrasive and militant, Gorilla Warfare beats out primal hardcore that comes off like a middle-school bully whose been held back far too many years. Yes, the world can be rough and sometimes it takes a tough attitude to embrace it, but you would've hoped that this Nashville band could have at least come up with a more original way to express it than short repetitive thuds they try to write off as songs. But you can't really blame them for their lack of dynamics since three out of the five members are brothers and they probably all shared the same limited record collection while growing up. ~~[WOUNDED] DAN FRAZIER~~

WAR OF AGES

FIRE FROM THE TOMB

War of Ages has re-released their self-titled album and renamed it *Fire From the Tomb*. This album includes newly recorded and significantly improved versions of all the songs from their first album. As you read the note from WOA on first page of the CD insert, "We love the songs off of our self-titled, however we felt the recording didn't do the album any justice. There was so much passion lyrically and musically in those songs that we felt re-recording and re-releasing the album was a must." I listened to the new recording right after listening to the previous one and there have been some major improvements made. Leroy Hamp has tweaked his vocals with more force and everything is tighter musically. More specifically, "False Prophet" and "My Solitude" have been notably upgraded. They have also nestled a new song, "The Awakening", into the middle of the album that maintains the overall cohesiveness. ~~[FACEDOWN] JENN SMITH~~

TRANSISTOR RADIO

A LEGACY BETWEEN

Silence is golden, at least in this instance. Transistor Radio, the flagship band on new rock imprint Up All Nite Records, turns out to be nothing more than musical blather that unremarkably echoes the current pop-punk overkill. A Legacy Between has too few bright spots ("California in December") and too many eye-rollers ("RaRandom") with harmonies gone wrong and riffs that fall short. The bottom line: if Transistor Radio were playing, you'd change the station. ~~[SYNTAX] MATT CONNER~~

Ratings

	DV	Writer
Remove The Veil *Another Way Home*	03	02*
Far-Less *A Toast To Bad Taste*	03*	04
Fauxliage *S/T*	04	05
Sonset Down *You Lose*	03*	03
Evoka *Cries From The Castlegate*	04	03*
Gorilla Warfare *The Battlefields*	02*	02*
War Of Ages *Fire From The Tomb*	04	04
Transistor Radio *A Legacy Between*	03	01
Various Artists *Frisbee: The Life And Death Of A Hippie...*	02	04
Over The Rhine *The Trumpet Child*	04	04
Last Winter *Under The Silver Of Machines*	03*	02*
Castanets *In The Vines*	03*	04
The Apprentice *Good Friends Don't Come Easy*	03	03
Mainstay *Becoming Who You Are*	03	03
Pantokrator *Aurum*	04	

VARIOUS ARTISTS

FRISBEE: THE LIFE AND DEATH OF A HIPPIE PREACHER [OFFICIAL SOUNDTRACK]

To paraphrase a Rumsfeldism, let's listen to the soundtrack we have and not the soundtrack we wish we had. The original cut I've seen of David DiSabatino's documentary about the late Lonnie Frisbee contained music by Jesus rock pioneer Larry Norman, U2 and others not on the disc reviewed here. Shame about the licensing difficulties, much less the hornet's nest the movie's stirred. But this remains a captivating-if unfortunately limited-sampler of musically and textually ambitious Christian hippiedom circa early-mid '70s. Songs by The All Saved Freak Band included here highlight their use of classical strings and words of apocalyptic melancholy, finding the tense comfort residing between psychedelia, prog and Left Banke-styled pop. Numbers by Agape run the gamut from sweet acoustic proclamation to lengthier proto-metal jazz-rock jamming. Early acts from the Calvary Chapel movement round out the set, with Gentle Faith and Stonewood Cross sounding notably darker and "hippier" than Joy's bluegrassy exuberance. [JESTER MEDIA] JAMIE LEE RAKE

VARIOUS ARTISTS

SOMETHING WORTH FIGHTING FOR (DVD)

As I thought about the title *Something Worth Fighting For*, footage played in my mind of about 10 to 15 people at a time on stage fighting for a chance to sing "Sick City" along with Jesus Wept. Amid the shoving and butchered song fragments, everyone was having a blast at Facedown Fest 2005. Facedown Records has compiled songs and videos from its 10-year existence into a 2-disc (CD+DVD) set. The CD has 32 solid tracks from both formerly and presently Facedown-signed bands. As for the DVD, the music videos aren't terrible, but they are slightly disappointing as an art form. It seems like all the videos from various bands were all confined within the same format only with different settings – it gets a little stale after a while. The live footage is very entertaining, though, and you will regret missing the aforementioned fest after you watch it. Over the past decade, Facedown has sprouted from the seed that was once a mail-order service for underground bands' records, Facedown Distribution, (founded by Jason Dunn in 1997) and blossomed into a full-fledged record label. *Something Worth Fighting For* is a substantial product of the ten years' progress Facedown Records has made. [FACEDOWN] JENN SMITH

OVER THE RHINE

THE TRUMPET CHILD

Over The Rhine is a refreshing Americana ensemble. Cincinnati natives Linford Detweiler and Karin Bergquist, the married couple who are the core of Over The Rhine, have been writing, touring, and recording since 1989. Karin delivers rich, soulful and slightly raspy melodies over the music arranged by Linford. Laid-back bass lines and a subtle medley of various styles (Country and Latino are the two most easily detectable) infused into an overall Jazz-themed album never leave your ears bored. The lyrics of "Desperate For Love" get a bit silly at one point: "Is this just a little fling? Or is it about a little bling-bling? Either way, you feel the sting-sting…" I wouldn't have been as surprised to hear those words had I been listening to, say, Chingy. However, the odd choice of terminology in that song wasn't completely an album killjoy for me, it just threw me off a little. [GREAT SPECKLED DOG] JENN SMITH

LAST WINTER

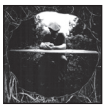
UNDER THE SILVER OF MACHINES

I hate to say this about someone's music, because I know a lot of work has probably been put towards it, but this album wasn't very engaging. All the songs had different melodies but the same elements: borderline whiney vocals (think Fall Out Boy), lots of power chords, guitar riffs that echo parts of the chorus being sung and then some effects (pretty much the same ones every time) thrown in randomly to mix things up. At least they are good at sticking to a consistent formula. The seriousness of the lyrics made me laugh at times: "Kiss so hard that I stop breathing. I could die right here…" It is pretty gross to picture that happening – some girl sucking the life from his mouth, his arms flailing. If I had to politely turn down a date with Last Winter, I would say, "No, you're really nice, but you play it too safe." [LIFE FORCE] JENN SMITH

CASTANETS

IN THE VINES

According to Asthmatic Kitty, the album is based on a Hindu fable about being trapped in an inescapable fate, with death and the limitations of our physical lives closing in from all corners. In the fable story, *The Well of Life*, a net stretched out by a giant woman surrounds a Brahman lost in the forest. The frantic Brahman runs in circles attempting to escape until he falls halfway down a pit and is entangled in vines. He discovers some bee hives halfway between the flesh-hungry six-faced elephant at the top of the pit and the waiting serpent at the bottom. As bees buzz around the Brahman and rats gnaw at the vines holding him up, all he can do is gorge on the sweet honey. True to the point is Ray Raposa with *In The Vines*. Songs like "Westbound, Blue" echo hints of the reoccurring theme, seeing the best despite the bad – your honey. Raposa's layered image-drawing lyrics both engage and draw you nearer for a closer listen. This album is filled with dark and haunting sounds and themes to match, but with hopeful light at the end of the tunnel. Every single element was thoroughly thought out and placed with great care in its own specific place to create each song as its own work of art to collectively represent *In The Vines*. Castanets is always a group effort; this time including, labelmate Sufjan Stevens, Nick Delffs (Shaky Hands), Rob Lowe (Lichens) and Annie Clark (St. Vincent). [ASTHMATIC KITTY] AMANDA CURTIS



THE APPRENTICE

GOOD FRIENDS DON'T COME EASY

I owe The Apprentice a debt of gratitude. As an HM intern back in 2005, I was faced with the task of sifting through a foot-tall stack of demo CD's. The majority of these scored from mediocre to downright painful, but this band's demo stood out as a diamond in the rough, and was featured in our "Pick of the Litter" section for that issue. This new offering contains much of the same potential, only without the same "wow" factor, but maybe that's because this time around I didn't have to sift it out of a pile of blah. Fans of Watashi Wa's most recent efforts will find something to like here. Eric Delong and crew bring 6 songs' worth of driving, earthy, roots rock. Nothing you haven't heard before, but a pleasant listen for sure. [FUTURE DESTINATION] TIM HALLILA

MAINSTAY

BECOMING WHO YOU ARE

Nothing wrong with a good hand-me-down. After all, numerous thrift stores make their living on such a market – taking one man's proverbial trash and spinning it for a few bucks. And there's definitely a market for it, otherwise our world wouldn't be so overwhelmed by second-hand shops. Luckily for Mainstay, this principle rings true in the musical world as well, as audiences far and wide seem more than okay with all-been-done-before riffs, choruses and rhythms. Mainstay doesn't break a mold with any of the art performed on *Becoming Who You Are*, quite an ironic title for an album built on mimicry. Yet the familiar formula followed does make for an enjoyable listen. There's not a weak track in the group. "Story" is as straightforward as it can possibly get. "When You Come Down" was done by everyone's fav late 90s pop rock act, but again it's very catchy. Vocalist Justin Anderson does his best Matt Wertz on album closer "Hang On" with a yearning delivery that works eerily like his "Lonely Tonight." So, while Mainstay doesn't "become" much of anything on their own, they look just fine in the clothes handed to them. [BEC] MATT CONNER

PANTOKRATOR

AURUM

While not utilizing as much orchestral keys to make their point (as they did on *Blod*), this intense Swedish metal band still incorporate plenty of dynamics to swing from gentle and melodic beauty to crushing heaviness ... on a dime. Whether it's quiet guitar picking or enchanting counter feminine vocals (like in "Where Lilith Found Her Peace") The production is nice and dry, emphasizing a more than solid low end. Solos abound, too. [WHIRLWIND] DOUG VAN PELT

FIGHT BEFORE SURRENDER

S/T

Circle pits are dead, but don't tell that to Fight Before Surrender. The Midwestern-based quartet is collectively carrying street punk's rotting carcass (or what's left of it) and making it stage dive as they spit out eleven choppy, gritty, tracks taken straight out of the gutter. It's up to you if that's a good or bad thing, but never listen to anyone that names their band, album, and first track all the same thing. ~~[WOUNDED] DAN FRAZIER~~

THE CLASSIC CRIME

SEATTLE SESSIONS (EP)

I should probably go on record as saying that I didn't care for The Classic Crime's debut, *Albatross*. Not for lack of trying. I'm a fan of the hardcore-lite/punk/indie rock genre in which these guys are centered. There wasn't anything horribly off about their debut. It was just … there. It was adequate, fairly well-done. But that was it. Nothing about it really stood out. So, when I got this new acoustic EP, I thought 'Hey, maybe things have changed ... maybe this will be more compelling.' Not really. Once again, while the tunes are fairly pleasing and nicely played, they're forgotten as soon as they're over. If you dig their sauce, you'll probably love this. But if not, skip it. ~~[TOOTH & NAIL] JEREMY HUNT~~

SONSOFDAY

FRAGILE PEOPLE

When I received this assignment, SONSOFDAY was a name that I was completely unaware of, but after giving their new album, Fragile People, a listen, an eerie sense of deja vu came over me. After days and days of pondering why the whiny vocals and melodic guitars seemed so familiar, it struck me: I'd heard it all before. SONSOFDAY was playing in my little sister's stereo everyday when I came home from work, it was playing in my mom's radio when she used to drive me to school, I even heard it every week before church. It was everything I'd ever heard before on Christian radio. They present catchy acoustic-feel-good-music, but like so many other bands in the genre, fail to present something that we haven't heard before. For what it is, SONSOFDAY puts forth a solid effort, but Fragile People shatters far from anything spectacular. ~~[RED HAMMER] NATHAN DOYLE~~

NEVIAH NEVI

BY THE BLOOD OF THEIR FEET

Female fronted metal act Neviah Nevi decided to incorporate diversity for their full-length debut *By The Blood Of Their Feet* – perhaps too much. As singer DeAngela Crozier's voice emits rough roars, drudging dialogue, and mediocre melody, the rest of the band counters with heavy clatter, soothing slumber, and token choruses. In the end, it's all too drawn out and mixed to follow… ~~[WOUNDED] DAN FRAZIER~~

BRINGING DOWN BROADWAY

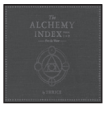
IT'S ALL GONE SOUTH

This is hard and heavy metalcore from start to finish. These guys bring plenty of brutal energy and technical chops to the table. The vocals rarely venture too far away from a steady stream of guttural growls, and each breakdown has a slow, pounding plod to it. This is a young band that certainly lacks nothing in terms of desire or skills, but that extra something lies just out of reach for now. Perhaps what's lacking is that little twist on the formula, a sprinkle of originality to make BDB truly stand out is a genre that is fast becoming bloated with new bands. For those who eat, sleep and breathe hardcore/metal, BDB offers enough mosh-worthy material to be welcomed into the family. Anyone tirelessly searching for the next August Burns Red, a band to breathe serious fire into an overpopulated scene … well, you might feel the need to keep looking. ~~[WOUNDED] TIM HALLILA~~

A PLEA FOR PURGING

A CRITIQUE OF MIND AND THOUGHT

Despite what you might already know about A Plea For Purging, they are not a hardcore band. The middle Tennessee quintet renown for spitting fire on stage will implement within their songs brutallic breakdowns and even an occasional gang vocal from their "Dude-bro Choir" ... but please, don't let them fool you. Only when these pure metalheads forget about trying to keep the pit alive, do they truly shine. Thanks to the braggart talents of guitarists Blake Martin and Lyle Paschal, the band's first full-length *A Critique Of Mind And Thought* is saved from the metalcore redundancy curse by constantly featuring sharp succint shreds. And inadvertently or not, the ranged results strike a solid and profound balance. ~~[FACEDOWN] DAN FRAZIER~~



THRICE

THE ALCHEMY INDEX, VOLS. I & II

When word got out that this band was going after the ambitious goal of releasing 4 EPs at once, a collective gasp of unbelief was probably uttered across the modern rock world. Splitting up their multiple personalities (I never figured them to be this schizophrenic) four ways, but releasing them in two parts gives the band's growing fanbase something to look forward to. At first glance, the *Fire* EP (*Vol. I*) seems to be the heavier, screaming and jamming side. At times you can feel the frantic post hardcore band that's been hinted at on *Vheissu* (like the fast chorus of "Image of the Invisible"), and they can flip the rock switch harder, with songs that could easily fit on any Project 86 album (like "Backdraft" or "The Arsonist"). They smooth things out with some slow anthemic guitars and vocals in "Burn The Fleet" and bring in some trippy piano for "The Flame Deluge" before confidently getting more ambient with the seventh track, "Digital Sea," which begins the *Water* EP (*Vol. II*). Imagine if Unwed Sailor covered Radiohead with whispery Bono-esque vocals and you get some idea of the wonder of "Open Water" or the wandering sounds of "Lost Continent." Not sure if I hear any obvious singles, but I know I have a full-length companion for many an attentive headphone listening experience. Ya gotta admire Thrice for trying this ... and love 'em for succeeding. ~~[VAGRANT] DOUG VAN PELT~~

DANIEL AMOS

INSTRUCTION THROUGH FILM (DVD)

If you're out to find the definitive Daniel Amos documentary, this isn't it. Even if you're seeking a comprehensive DA video compilation, don't stop here. But for all those who love Terry Taylor's pioneering band that won't go away (God bless 'em!), this DVD offers a fun and informal career overview. Highlights include Calvary Chapel, Costa Mesa clips of the group's original country and western incarnation, as well as a kicking performance of "Darn Floor – Big Bite" at Cornerstone. In between, there is a *Vox Humana*-era Terry Taylor 700 Club interview; a bit where Terry Taylor interviews himself; and a Brainstorm Records promo piece that also features the lighter side of Mike Knott (Who knew he even had one?) and Joe Taylor. My only complaint is that this DVD is a little tough to navigate, with screen icons that don't illustrate specifically what each section contains. But that's a small price to pay for a Daniel Amos obsessive like me. ~~[STUNT] DAN MACINTOSH~~

Ratings

	DV	Writer
Fight Before Surrender *S/T*	03	02
The Classic Crime *Seattle Sessions (EP)*	04	02
SonsOfDay *Fragile People*	02	02
Neviah Nevi *By The Blood Of Their Feet*	02	02
Bringing Down Broadway *It's All Gone South*	03	02*
A Plea For Purging *A Critique Of Mind And Thought*	03*	03*
Thrice *The Alchemy Index, Vols. I & II*	04*	

Demon Hunter | cont'd

Demon Hunter is excited about the gumbo of styles and grooves that permeate *Storm the Gates of Hell* and they're energized about stretching outside of the box. "It's a record with a lot of different elements," Clark says. "There's a lap steel solo and we even used a Theremin on a song. It's definitely heavier and faster than our previous stuff, but at the same time it's very poppy. I hate to say it, but it's actually more commercial." While diversity is good, it can sometimes precipitate backlash when it comes to heavy, aggressive bands. After all, when Metallica released the *Black Album*, legions of fans leapt off of tall buildings. "While it's heavy, there is a real melodic moment as well," Clark says. "Instead of screaming the entire record, I played around with the formula a bit more and ended up singing on a lot more parts. Truthfully, it's a lot more diverse, so people may have mixed feelings about it."

"We need to relate to nonbelievers on some level... Not a sinful one, but a human one."

Hunting demons evokes all sorts of images; blood, screams, bullet holes and victory are amongst them. This band isn't safe, but that does not diminish the role they can have in eternity. They want to interact and reach the lost wherever it takes them. "There's a purpose for what certain people do, a purpose for what we do. We don't dress like a contemporary Christian band because that's not what or who we are. We're not looking to reach the people that listen to that music. You aren't going to reach a heavy metal fan unless you play metal and relate to them on their own level, period."

Clark has seen a lot of things. He's ministered, prayed, and explained himself and his band until he's blue in the face. He knows that, no matter what, the role of his band is reaching the unreachable. "We need to relate to nonbelievers on some level," he reflects. "Not a sinful one but a human one. That is the only way we're going to reach certain people; because truthfully they won't be walking into our churches."

✖

Chris Cornell | cont'd

a rich person, poor person, a man, a woman, a housewife, a construction person, a software author, a lawyer, me. We all come up from the same reasons. We all deal with it the same way. We all deal with the same (bleep) and we all have to use the same faculties to get over it. Ultimately, that's being a really good thing – to realize that's the truth, because it's like, 'Oh, I'm not a misunderstood person who's alone in this and is dealing with substance abuse and alcohol abuse because it's my only recourse,' which is what everyone thinks. (chuckles) That means that I don't have to do this and that means that I've got a lot of company in these that are my problems. That's helped me actually excel at everything that I was already pretty good at and become like the most perfect songwriter I've ever been – the best I've ever sang, I think, on stage, the most focused I've ever been as a musician, creatively, the most focused I've ever been in my personal life, the most available, for sure, I've ever been in my personal life. So, it's all been nothing but good. I can't think of one bad thing that's come out of it. Except that I don't get to drink anymore! (laughs)

I want to respect your time, so if I can I'll throw three questions at you and let you pick one; and that'll be the last one:
–What inspired you to breathe new life into Michael Jackson's "Billy Jean?"
–If you were gonna go blind in 24 hours, what would you want to see?
–What perspective has fatherhood brought to your life?
Well, if I were going to go blind in 24 hours, I would want to sit with my children and watch Michael Jackson's "Billy Jean" video.

Good one. Thanks, man. Appreciate it.
Thank you.

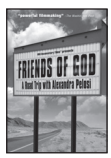
✖

Entertainment reviews
DVDS, BOOKS & GADGETS

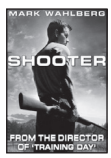
01 THE ULTIMATE GIFT
FOX VIDEO

With relaxed writing and acting, the tough life lessons thrust upon this benefactor are both enjoyable and wince-inducing. Old pros, like James Garner, Brian Dennehy, and Bill Cobbs offer the contrasting stability against newcomer Drew Fuller's wildly erratic and bratty character. What starts out as a series of tests that will either forbid or unlock the fortunes of a wealthy grandfather to the unappreciative, spoiled, rich-kid soon becomes an engaging story as Mr. Privileged-pants (Jason Stevens) befriends a precocious little girl (played by *Little Miss Sunshine*'s star, Abigail Breslan) with her own secret (she's losing a battle to cancer). When Jason passes the month-long challenge to find a genuine friend, his last-minute agreement with little Emily turns into the real deal as it changes his life. There's a couple of real funny gags amidst the life lessons, not the least of which is a cattle prod rude awakening during his month of hard labor. Pretty soon the reviewer finds him or herself cheering the new Jason on, just like one of the overseeing trustees, played by Lee Meriwether. Two other sparkling gems find their way subtly inserted into the movie: Dylan's "Gotta Serve Somebody" and Malcolm Muggeridge's quote: "Every happening, great or small, is a parable by which God speaks to us. The art of life is to get the message." Bravo to Director John Doe for taking Jim Stovall's book and making it come to life on screen as a heart-warming yet profound work of art. *Doug Van Pelt*

02 BLADES OF GLORY *DREAMWORKS*
I believe Will Ferrell is perfecting his craft. Teaming up with Jon Heder works pretty well, though Napoleon must lean on Chazz and body language pretty heavily. Lots of repeated laughs can be had. I like: "I don't see nothing in here (holds up the Bible) about two guys skating together." *DV*



03 FRIENDS OF GOD *HBO VIDEO*
With each presidential election giving the media reason, evangelicals are now being noticed. Fortunately for us, Director Alexandra Pelosi presents a balanced perspective of the sometimes goofy landscape we paint. Her interview with comedian Brad Stine most eloquently speaks for Christian conservatives. *DV*



04 SHOOTER *PARAMOUNT*
Mark Wahlberg once again does a great job as the lead role as an independent character in a journey from the backwoods to the upper echelons in no time. The ironic and menacing twists in the plot help explain what pushes Bob Lee Swagger to such extreme ends as a fugitive. A totally cool guy movie. *DV*

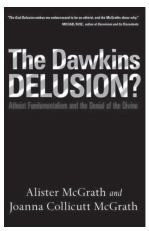
05 FLOCK OF DODOS *DOCURAMA*
An Evolutionary Biologist put together a fairly engaging documentary that takes a sometimes frank look at the Evolution vs. Intelligent Design debate. While admitting the flaws on his own team, this Harvard grad also shows respect for the other side in his still-biased film, especially letting his hair down in the extras. *DV*

06 THE DARWIN AWARDS *FOX VIDEO*
This is a somewhat awful movie, but the premise that it's built upon (of ridiculous accidental deaths ridding the gene pool of its inferior members) is worth a laugh or two. The stoners at the Metallica concert, the up-up-and-away cell phone and the rocket car are good examples. *DV*

07 PATHFINDER *FOX VIDEO*
Following a terrific graphic novel tale that extrapolates on the legend that Viking marauders invaded this soil 600 years before Columbus, only to be expelled by cunning Native Americans. The cinematography is stunning and battle action intense. Not bad for a fantasy without all the Hollywood hype. *DV*

08 PRISON BREAK – SEASON TWO *FOX VIDEO*
Riveting. Being able to fly through this thrilling season post-breakout without having to wait through the proverbial week is a fantastic benefit. Seeing favorite characters bite the dust one at a time kept you guessing. The occasional episode commentary was cool, as was the Easter egg on character deaths. *DV*

	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08
SPIRITUAL RELEVANCY (%)	100	50	100	40	90	20	30	50
OBSCENITIES		21		31	3	60	2	11
SCENES OF GORE		1		9		2	7	10
NUDITY / SEXUALITY				1		3	1	1



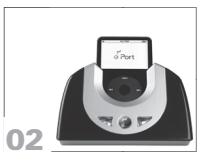
The Dawkins Delusion
Alister and Joanna McGrath – IVP

Being arrogant is pretty much universally dumb; but being exposed as arrogant in front of a bunch of people really sucks. Much like a crotchety old Harvard professor filmed in the *Flock of Dodos* documentary DVD reviewed below, the author of the best-seller *The God Delusion* is equally taken to task for his propaganda here. The coyly titled *The Dawkins Delusion* is subtitled with further insight into the argument it attacks: *Atheist Fundamentalism and the Denial of the Divine*. What's so refreshing about this book is that the author treats his foe with respect. For example, in their chapter "Deluded About God," the McGraths acknowledge that Dawkins knows what he's talking about in the realm of biology, calling his critique of William Paley's 19th century theories "the finest criticism of this argument in print" as well as "fair, gracious and accurate." The authors applaud whenever a good discussion is sparked, showing their appreciation for good debate, and they equally denounce when he quells such by either misrepresenting religion so poorly, assigning inaccurate labels in an effort to support his points, or letting his spiteful emotions get in the way. It's all a little bit heady, but compelling and at times fun, nonetheless. *Doug Van Pelt*

The Books of the Bible
TNIV – International Bible Society

Making the Bible easier to understand without robbing it of its style and context has been a challenge for the ages. This version has taken out chapter and verse numbers, aligned text in single columns, removed footnotes, re-arranged the order of some books, and compiled some later-divided books back into a whole. The result is a read that remains true to the context of much of the writings. The poetry feels more like poetry, and the letters/epistles look and read a little more like the letters they were written as. What's really cool is the book introductions. While not long and certainly not laborious, the narrative makes the principle characters, like Paul and Timothy, come alive, adding tension and excitement into what is most likely an accurate context of the times surrounding its original writing While many of these details have been pulled off before, this one does an overall good job of organizing and presenting the text. It's quite the perfect match for this *Today's New International Version*, which majors in translating "concept for concept" as accurately as possible from the original Greek and Hebrew. *DVP*

01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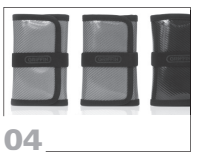
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06

Gadgets
Logi-Tech, iPort, Griffin, & Musika

(01) Logi-Tech's lower mid-line entry into the i-portable speaker system world, **Pure-Fi Anywhere** ($149) introduces an amazing and wonderful advancement: the small remote control that actually controls the iPod, allowing free movement through the menu. Although small in size and moderate in sonic output, its nice case and portability make this unit attractive. (02) The **i-Port FS-2** ($149 + $49 remote control) is a cool iPod to stereo to PC sync machine that functions well, with a nice remote, but lacks universal fitting with all iPod models right out of the box. (03) Griffin's **iVault** ($24) is a surprisingly cool & tough nano case that holds securely shut with magnets. (04) The **California Roll** for the nano ($19) looks better on paper than real life, but does conveniently wrap up the iPod and accessories. (05) Griffin's **trio plus** ($29) allows for an (almost too) thick leather fashion statement in 3 color schemes, held shut by magnets. (06) **Musika** ($4) is a fun iPod game that uses your music library to tease and test your letter recognition skills – with difficulty levels from "casual" (easy) to "intense" (insanely fast). *DV*

[logitech.com, iport.com, griffintechnology.com, apple.com/games/ipod/musika]

The Christian & Art

WITH KEMPER CRABB

The Disconnect: Why Evangelicals Make Bad Art (Part the Eighth)

We continue to consider the question of why, in an America where a large portion of the population (one-fourth to one-fifth, reportedly) claim to be Evangelicals, who believe that Holy Scripture directs believers in "every good work" (1 Tim. 3: 16-17) (which would include the making of art by Christians), the Church has failed so dismally in producing effective and quality art (music, television, dance, film, etc.).

In earlier installments, we discovered that this failure is in large part due to a lack of knowledge and understanding of the Bible by Evangelicals. The twin causes of this ignorance we saw to be: first, laziness motivated by self-worship in the pursuit of pleasure; and, secondly, deficient theology as a result of disregarding the Bible's ethical demands in favor of an emotional feel-good experience.

The surface view of Scripture which flows from these sins results further in the loss of the ability for Evangelicals to see reality (God, themselves, and the world) as it really is. Christian art depends in its creation on a Biblically particularized version of the human experience of God's Created Reality, and the absence of a correct understanding of that reality leads inexorably to inferior, distorted expressions rightly viewed by both Christians and non-Christians as inaccurate and irrelevant representations of the universe in its depth and beauty. Bad theology inevitably leads to bad art.

In the last few issues, we began to examine the ways a defective theology of Creation (especially of the Providential Sustaining of the universe by God) affects the making of art. We saw that a lack of understanding that God mediates knowledge of Himself through all created things (Rom. 1:18-24; Psalm 19) and actively "holds all things together" (Col. 1:16-17; Heb.1:3) leads to a devaluation of Creation itself (especially of matter), and to seeing reality as something other than what it is, the arena of the spiritual, of God's Engagement with His world in every aspect and area.

We saw as well that, if God is not seen as engaged with Creation in mediated multiple levels of symbolic knowledge through the world, reality itself collapses into an opaqued collection of meaningless random things, which are subject to being manipulated into meaning anything sinful man wishes them to mean. This is the reduction of the universe from a multi-level, meaning-imbued Creation to nothing more than a platform for the propaganda of the wicked and the strong.

This also reduces art, which is itself particular expressions of artists' experience of the world, to a one-dimensional expression of whatever the artist wishes to understand and portray the world as (and thus an attempt to generate meaning for the world from his own finite being, rather than an understanding and receptive reflection of the multi-nuanced, deep meaning with which God has imbued His Creation).

Since fallen mankind outside of regeneration into Christ is committed to suppressing the Truths they unavoidably know from Creation itself (Rom. 1:18-36), they are inescapably held captive by the Devil (2 Cor. 4:4) and are hostile to God's purposes (Rom. 8:6-7). This results inevitably in the art produced by unregenerate man as being, in important ways, only an imitation of the Satanically-dominated world-system, rather than an accurate expression of the reality revealed in Scripture.

This is what makes it so dangerous for Christians to uncritically ape pagan art, loosely "baptizing" that art with surface cosmetic "Christian" overlays: such a practice makes a Christian worldview sub-Biblical and thus sub-Christian. Anyone who is exposed to such an expression can easily be left confused about what the Faith truly is. The ignorance of Scripture rampant amongst most Evangelicals virtually guarantees that this misguided practice will continue, eroding both knowledge of and respect for Christianity in our culture.

Art, of course, must be expressed through culturally-grounded media, since art does not spring from a vacuum. Therefore, cultural forms must be embraced and employed by Christian artists (indeed, the reclamation of all things [Acts 3:21] is part of what the advance of God's Kingdom is intended to accomplish at the end of time).

The way Christians go about this task, the methodology of doing so, must be governed by God's Word to inform the correct appropriation of those forms.

[kempercrabb.net]

The way I see it
Chris Wighaman

BABIES

A couple of my favorite people just had a baby [congrats Dave & Sarah!]. Babies are wonderful. They are little bundles of joy who eat and poop and … well, eat some more and then poop again. This brings in the whole diaper thing. For those of you who have never changed a diaper, lets just say it's ummm, gross. Seriously, and anyone that gives you the "ohh, it's just a baby poo, it's not gross" line – don't believe them, it's poop we're talking about here. There is nothing cute, sweet or remotely likeable about poop – even if it comes from a cute little human blob. Don't get me wrong, babies are amazing and I love the ones I have; just keep your poopy one away from me, okay? [Don't get me started on the whole racket dogs have going, how in the world are WE picking up their messes!?]

Paul, in writing to the Ephesians, says this: "He handed out gifts of apostle, prophet, evangelist, and pastor-teacher to train Christ's followers in skilled servant work, working within Christ's body, the church, until we're all moving rhythmically and easily with each other, efficient and graceful in response to God's Son, fully mature adults, fully developed within and without, fully alive like Christ. No prolonged infancies among us, please. We'll not tolerate babes in the woods, small children who are an easy mark for impostors. God wants us to grow up, to know the whole truth and tell it in love – like Christ in everything. We take our lead from Christ, Who is the source of everything we do. He keeps us in step with each other. His very breath and blood flow through us, nourishing us so that we will grow up healthy in God, robust in love." [4:14-16] Babies are important. Without babies there would be no future! The same goes for the followers of Christ: if there weren't new "baby" followers, there would be no future. Ever noticed how new Christians are excited and want to share their new-found faith in Christ? Paul here loved that there were new believers, but was frustrated with those who were allowed to simply get excited, but ceased to mature in their faith. They became the awkward "babies" who didn't contribute much to the family – except maybe some poop other people had to clean up. Paul wants the family of believers in Ephesus to use their gifts and love for each other to bind together and grow up! The Ephesians needed to guide the new and to reanimate the old. His desire was for the entire community to become mature followers of Christ who aren't satisfied with just becoming part of the family, but continually wanting to become more like Christ in every way. When the body of Christ is working in unity – watch out, God will move and use the group to impact everyone who comes into contact with it. Take a look at the community of believers you are part of. How can you better band together and grow up in Christ?

Devotions
with Greg Tucker

"Whoever is not against us is for us."
–Words of Jesus, recorded in Mark 9:40

As young teenagers when Vietnam ended, my schoolmates and I were awestruck when soldiers returned to our otherwise quiet Midwestern town. We noticed battle-worn men assigned to wheelchairs or with empty sleeves pinned neatly up. One man had a hook where once there had been a hand, and over time we learned that even the healthy soldiers were wounded – it just wasn't visible on the outside. There were lots of casualties from the war.

In the 1980s a different war was looming – the Worship War – and well-meaning soldiers were faithfully divided into two camps. It was Hymns versus Choruses, and a surprising number of people gave life and limb to discredit the "enemy." It sounds odd today, but the issue they fought over was how to worship God. Imagine.

This may come as a shock, but worship is not that segment of music before the pastor preaches. In and of itself, music is never worship. There may be a residency of worship in what's being sung, but whether it's penned by Martin Luther or Demon Hunter, no song worships God simply because it mentions Christ.

Early in the New Testament, before Jesus began His public ministry, John the Baptist traveled declaring that God's promise of a messiah would soon be fulfilled. Many were so impressed with the man's effectiveness, they asked if he was the Son of God. "No," he replied, "I am not." (John 1:19-23)

That simple acknowledgement is a good definition of worship: Worship happens when I realize God is God, and I am not. Countless times each day I come to a fork in the road, a point that requires my response to the question, "Who is in charge here?" What I choose will shape my words, my thoughts, my actions and reactions. It will determine what I write on my calendar and in my checkbook. To declare God's lordship by the choices I make is worship.

Jesus addressed our worship differences, even some of our belief differences, head-on. When the disciples observed a man worshiping outside of their group, they immediately asked if Jesus wanted them to break it up. The inference was, "Because someone is not like us, they are against us." But Jesus countered their earthly wisdom with his own: "If they're not against us they are with us." Big difference. (Mark 9:38-41)

The directive to appreciate Christians who don't look like we do comes from God. And to obey Him in that… well, that's worship. And worship doesn't wound.

[Greg Tucker lives in your computer at HopeCCA.com]

PICK OF THE LITTER

Tim McAllister

Sometimes taking a few years off out of the public spotlight is good for a musician ... for they may come back with strong, fresh, and creative material like Tim McAllister did with *Strong Tower*. Whether it's quirky alternative pop-influenced rock like "Million" or the chill horns in "Last Prayer," McAllister seems to comfortably settle into a sonic spectrum that's heavily influenced by equal parts David Byrne and David Bowie. Smart instrumentation – as opposed to "over-playing" and self-indulgence – take centerstage, like the afore-mentioned horns or piano, guitars and brushes on the drums. You might recall McAllister's fine voice with his alt-rock band Flock 14 from the late 80s and Graceland/Frontline Records. (Doug Van Pelt)
timmcallister.com

William Stenner

Fresh and hum-able tunes. In the wonderful "Your Eye's," Stenner's just strumming along like a missing member of the Lost Dogs or something. In fact, you almost expect the boys to chime in with "Breathe Deep." (DV)
reverbnation.com/williamstenner

The Skies Revolt

If you attended this year's Cornerstone Festival, you no doubt walked past this band's bus and/or saw their cardboard robot walking around. This outfit is certainly all over the place musically. They certainly won't be accused of trying to sound like everybody else. (DV)
theskiesrevolt.com

She Came From Above

Casting a very cool, ambient vibe, they weave subtle percussion, layered textures and chiming guitars in just the right places. They get all Hundred Year Storm on us and then they break out with breakdowns and screaming. (DV)
myspace.com/shecamefromabove

Afterimage

Nice tight blackish/death metal without crowding up the sonic spectrum. In other words, it's produced and played terrifically well. The occasional guitar solos are super tasteful. Simply put, these guys rule! (DV)
afterimagemetal.com

This Fires Embrace

Here's the deal: vocalist Aaron Benner was at the show in Columbus, Ohio where Dimebag Darrell got shot. In fact, he went home with Dime's blood all over him. It changed his life. He found Christ. But it's not just a sweet human interest story. Benner carries on like Howard Jones of Killswitch, and the band doesn't lag behind an ounce. (DV)
thisfiresembrace.com

Crunchy

Returning with his third solo disc, this clever and skilled artist returns with the strengths of *All Day Sucker*, sans the forgettable weaknesses of *Clown School Dropout*. The hooks of Cheap Trick are treated with tight playing and equal parts energy and attitude. Love it. (DV)
montycolvin.com

Francisco The Man

A lovely lone voice high above the subtle picking and chiming minimalistic drumming create a really pleasant listen not too far from Neil Young or Ester Drang. Totally charming and engaging. (DV)
myspace.com/franciscothemanmusic

Second Thief

Strong, anthemic melodic metalcore with great sing-along choruses and powerful, tight guitars. Heaviness is their ally. (DV)
myspace.com/secondthief

Stonehigh

Nickelback and Kutless better watch out, 'cause this band has figured out the secret formula for modern rocking their fans with straight-up hooks. (DV)
myspace.com/stonehigh

Safe Haven

Big choruses and punchy energetic riffs are the common ingredient in Safe Haven's songs. Possibly ready for Christian radio. (DV)
safehavenrock.com

Bodies Of Water

This crazy outfit is fun, cool, stark, and bold ... kinda like The Polyphonic Spree. Amazing and fun to listen to. Very musical. (DV)
bodiesofwater.net

New Releases from the Alien Patrol:

"TALAMOD"
Pilot For Kite

"THRESHOLD"
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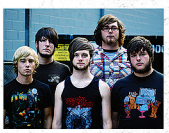

DIVIDE THE SEA

THE EMBERLIGHT

THE ENDING UP

IN UNCERTAIN TIMES

ME IN MOTION

MOORLAND

NINEBALL

ONE LIFE LOST

PILOT FOR KITE

SECOND LIFE

SECOND THIEF

SOUND METHOD

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HUNTER BURGAN
AFI

MR. MURDER

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THE ROUND SOUND
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AUDIX

Audix OM7

Rob Beckley of Pillar with his OM7

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The DP-7 consists of:

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- 1 x D-6 kick mic
- 1 x D-4 floor tom mic
- 2 x ADX51 condenser overhead mics
- 4 x Dvice rim mount clips

Audix DP-7

The DP-7 from Audix is comprised of precision made microphones designed to fill the specific needs of artists and engineers for both studio and live applications. Primarily aimed at miking drums and percussion, the heart of the DP-7 package is the highly acclaimed D6 kic drum microphone. The D-6 will impress anyone looking for a huge, clean kick drum sound offering a combination of ground-shaking lows along with clarity and attack.
Next, the i-5 which is intended for snare drum, consisting of an elegant design and heavy duty cast body and dent resistant steel grill.
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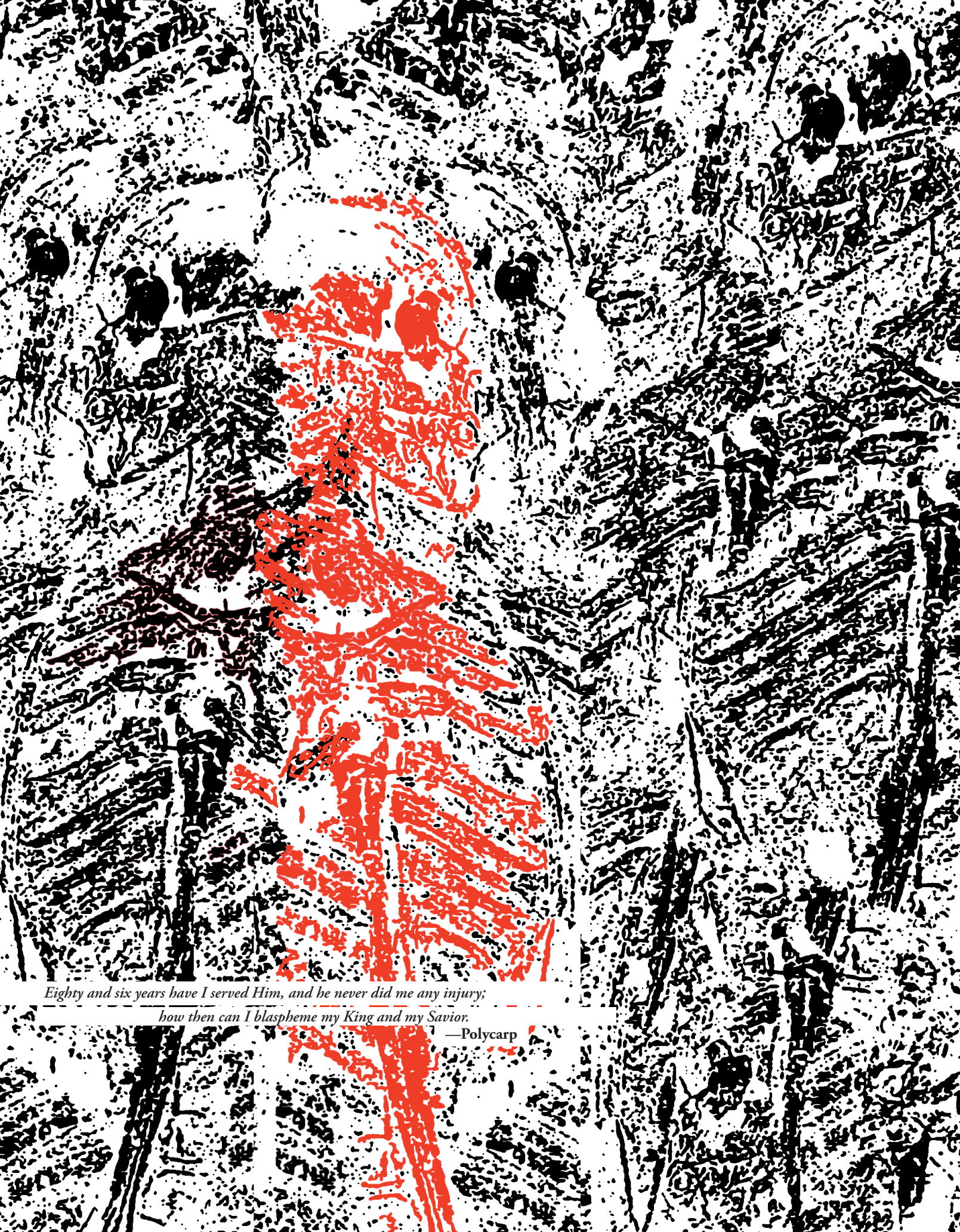

Eighty and six years have I served Him, and he never did me any injury; how then can I blaspheme my King and my Savior.

—Polycarp